



■ australian playstation

■ issue #019

World First Verdict

GT4

*Gran Turismo 4
takes on R: Racing*



101 GAMES
2004 PREVIEWED

SPLINTER CELL

PANDORA TOMORROW
Uncle Sam wants you online

PLAYSTATION PORTABLE

Smaller than an iPod with
the power of a PS2?

FORBIDDEN SIREN

Scarier than Silent Hill

REVIEWED
DESTRUCTION DERBY
KILL SWITCH MAX
PAYNE 2 THE SIMS
GHOST RECON JS
TERMINATOR 3

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YOUR NEWSAGENT

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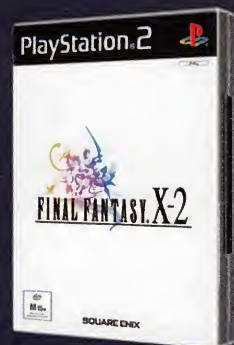
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040 GT4 VS R: RACING Ridge meets Gran. It's bold, it's beautiful.

028 | SPLINTER CELL Sam Fisher is back, online.

PSW WELCOME

EDITORIAL

Late last year, the annual Australian Game Developers Conference was held in Melbourne. The weekend provides a chance for local developers to converge and discuss their field, collating, collaborating, sharing and caring around the creation of games. Foreign speakers travel out to give presentations and keynotes, while the new wave of game development talent has a chance to mix with those of the industry they intend joining. At AGDC 2003, the big talk was of Atari Melbourne House's *Transformers Armada*, the most anticipated title ever to be developed in Australia. There was also growing momentum towards the PSP platform, with it being the focus of both a technical presentation and SCEE Executive Vice President of Development Phil Harrison's keynote address. Check out our interview with Phil on page 12.

My experiences of the conference? Well, as an event it doesn't even attempt to offer anything by way of actual game-playing entertainment. Controllers were almost non-existent, and, thanks to strict global marketing strategies sewing shut otherwise agreeable developers' lips, information about upcoming releases was difficult to discover. This world of development is a far cry from the everyday gamer's experience of the industry, which typically doesn't stretch far beyond EB, the odd magazine or two and the games themselves. Either technical or business-oriented, most presentations and discussions at the conference had very narrow appeal. Yet there were aspects of game development present at the conference to which we can all relate. In the practice of playing, of identifying pleasing game elements, and cursing those that frustrate, we all incorporate the game designer's outlook in our playing whether consciously or not. And so, for me, the AGDC provided a refreshing insight into the other, 'less glitz more grit' side of games. Away from the programming, and even art elements of games, the very human factor of game design was stressed, of gender inclusive games, of the importance of game balancing, of gameplay and its supposed declining emphasis.

Check out www.agdc.com.au for more information, both about last year's conference and soon, 2004's.

/ JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE



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GLOBAL

A LASER GUIDED NEWS STRIKE FROM THE GLOBAL SWAT TEAM

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FINAL FANTASY X2

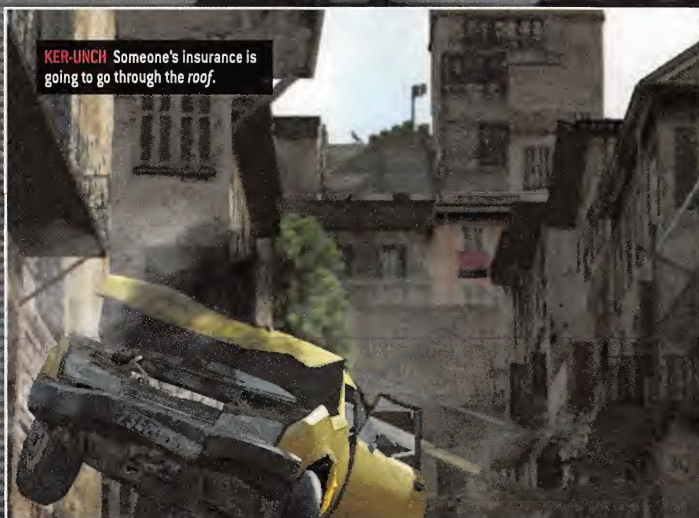
GO TANNER First shots of the man and his mental motorbike, ever.



CRASH TEST Years of programming went into these terrifying crashes.



KER-UNCH Someone's insurance is going to go through the roof.



WHEELS OF STEEL Just one of the many bikes featured in the game.



TWO WHEELS GOOD

HEIST ON A BIKE! IT'S DRIVER 3!

TANNER TAKES TO THE ROAD ON TWO WHEELS – WE SHOW YOU THE VERY FIRST SHOTS ANYWHERE!

THIS IS YOUR FIRST EVER CHANCE TO SEE WHAT

Driver 3's hero Tanner looks like when he's riding on the forthcoming game's newest, shiniest vehicles. This monstrous superbike is just one of a garage-full of two-wheeled terrors featuring in the game, and PSW is proud to be the very first to show you them. Apart from biking, you can see just how much damage Tanner will cause from these images of incredible automotive carnage. Thanks to developer Reflections' spot-on damage modelling, every single bumper, windscreen wiper and wingnut is capable of getting broken, bent or flying off the car in an orgy of crazed auto-mutilation.

We've been waiting for *Driver 3* for a long while now. Istanbul, Nice and Miami have long been confirmed as

the locations for Tanner's undercover cop activities, and we've discovered you'll also be taking control of supertankers, speedboats and all manner of 'borrowed' vehicular goodness in the exquisitely rendered cities. The designers are keen to stress that this isn't some *Grand Theft Auto 3* rip-off, but a story-based collection of the most amazing car chases yet seen in a game. In fact, *Driver 3* is now so big and impressive it's going around referring to itself as *Driv3r*, but we're having none of that. We'll leave the embedded numbers to *WipeOut* sequels and hokey ghost movies, thanks.

If this kind of two-wheeled excellence isn't enough to get your pulse racing, maybe you'd like to know more

about the exemplary cast who are voicing the crime-ridden story. Michael Madsen, better known as *Reservoir Dogs*' Mr White, plays the Tan-man himself. Ving Rhames from *Pulp Fiction* and *Mission: Impossible* takes the role of sidekick, and Michelle Rodriguez and Mickey Rourke fill out the cast as love interest and villain respectively (we hope we've got that the right way round, see our car stars box for more details.) All this excitement has got us quivering with ill-suppressed lust for *Driver 3*. It arrives here before mid-year and, as you've probably already guessed, we'll be the first to bring you every last drop of news and judgement on what's looking to be one of 2004's finest titles.



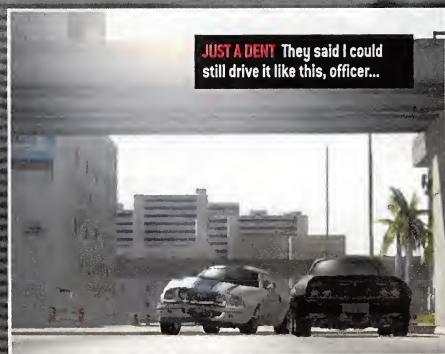
I CAN FLY! Istanbul action with a car, a ramp and a raving loon.



JUST A DENY They said I could still drive it like this, officer...



FENCING PRACTISE Mere wire can't hold you back in *Driver 3*.



EAT MY DUST Faster and more agile, or just a deathtrap?

CAR STARS

WHO'S PLAYING WHAT IN *DRIVER 3*



MICHAEL MADSON

PLAYS: Tanner, *Driver 3*'s leading man

FINEST HOUR:

Cutting a cop's ear off to sweet soul music in *Reservoir Dogs*.



VING RHAMES

PLAYS: Tobias Jones, Tanner's sidekick

FINEST HOUR:

Squealing like a girl while getting redneck love in *Pulp Fiction*.



MICHELLE RODRIGUEZ

PLAYS: Ultra-dangerous gang girl Carlita

FINEST HOUR:

Hacking heads off flesh-hungry zombies in the *Resident Evil* movie.



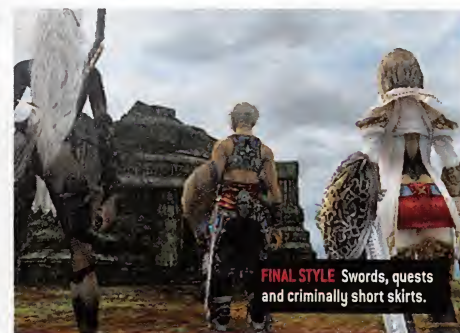
MICKEY ROURKE

PLAYS: Bad-as-old-eggs crime lord Jericho

FINEST HOUR:

Drinking a life's worth of alcohol in one mad night in *Barfly*.

FINAL FANTASY X-2



FINAL STYLE Swords, quests and criminally short skirts.

DIRTY DOZEN

FINAL FANTASY XII IS UNVEILED!

THE WORLD'S BIGGEST ADVENTURE RETURNS TRAILING CLOUDS OF GLORY.

THE FIRST EVER IMAGES OF SQUARE'S NEW FINAL

Fantasy title appeared last month, leaving us slack-jawed with stunned desire. The sprawling adventure marks a return to the series' roots after the massively multiplayer online action of *Final Fantasy XI*. You'll control a group of characters questing through a magical world, but this time it's not an entirely new one. The world of Ivalice has previously been used as the setting for *Final Fantasy Tactics* on PSone and, lately, Game Boy Advance.

Ashe and Vaan are the new stars, and unfeasibly huge monsters can once again be summoned to fight for you. Stylistically, the game seems to blend art deco design *a la Phantom Menace* with a sunny southern Mediterranean feel. Cloudbusting airships abound, and different languages are spoken in different countries. There's rumoured to be a much greater emphasis on social standing, with some creatures considered less posh than others. Fans of the series can breathe a sigh of relief, because the giant Chocobo birds are still in here and the magical Moogle race are represented as well. We've also heard rumours that developer Square has implemented a few graphical tricks which mean PS2 can display even more detail than in the previous splendid looking games. Rather than going to the map screen, you'll zoom out to display the whole world around you. Japanese gamers can expect to play *Final Fantasy XII* in late winter, but we might not see this until the beginning of 2005.

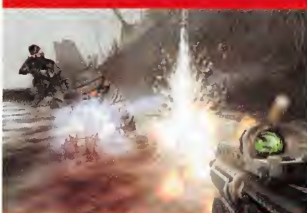


CHICKEN RUN Chocobos look a bit harder and more evil in FFXII.



MIDDLE AGES There's a definite medieval feel to the new game.

PSW'S 10 MOST WANTED



1. KILLZONE

PSW is cosy'ing up inside the womb-like inner sanctum of *Killzone* developer Guerrilla, sucking up freshly shat liquid info through a giant straw. We'll have digested it for next month.

2. GRAN TURISMO 4

We've got the game here. We're playing it right now. It's one of the most beautiful things we've ever seen. Not in a girly way. But in a men-who-like-cars kinda way. It's the tops.

3. DRIV3R

Why are we still calling it *Driver 3* in spite of the name change? Because otherwise it looks like we've made a mistake. Like when we have to spell *Medal of Honor* without a 'u'.

4. SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW

Shhh. Don't disturb Sam Fisher. He's power-napping. Just keep tiptoeing on past. There's really no need to wake him anyhow. He hasn't done anything interesting this month.

5. CONFLICT: VIETNAM

"What's this?" you ask with a puzzled wrinkle etched across your detestable visage. "It's the sequel to *Conflict: Desert Storm* you doofus," we reply, flipping the collars up on our leather jacket while high-fiving Ralph Malph.

6. ONIMUSHA 3

Breaking news: you may never get to play *Onimusha 3* (but only if you're a deposed president of a Middle Eastern country who's currently thinking about growing your beard back. Do it.)

7. R: RACING

You'll be sick of the sight of *R: Racing* after our 16-page mega feature. So we'll use this space to remind you how great flavoured milk can taste: flavoured milk can taste great.

8. FORBIDDEN SIREN

So *Forbidden* is the sound of this *Siren* that Sony won't let us listen to it. All we know is that it's unhinged survival horror and that we want it very much.

9. METAL GEAR SOLID 3

We took *Snake Eater* out last month in the vain hope that the snub would spur Konami to bury us in exclusive screenshots. They didn't. Shit.

10. RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK

Consider this a small toe dunked into the tepid pool of *Resident Evil* online. We have our doubts – and they're so bulbous we're struggling to hide them.



CHAARGE! The schoolboy sport gets reinvented.



I LOVE YOU "But I've never known how to say it before."

JOLLY GOOD SHOW

QUICK, MAKE A RUGBY GAME!

DESTROY POMMY BANDWAGONS IN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY.

WELL BEFORE THE WORLD CUP, WELL BEFORE RUGBY

2004, well before even the PS2, there was a game we all loved on our beloved PS ones. A rugby game. The rugby game. *Jonah Lomu Rugby* was its name, and, by jingos, was she a game. So it gives PSW so much joy to announce that that title's developers are back, backed by Acclaim, and all set to release *World Championship Rugby* in March.

As you can see from the screenshots, *WCR* (not to be confused, of course, with *WRC* the rally game) features all the official team likenesses, including those dashing skin tight

numbers the English and French get to wear. It has not yet been confirmed if they can be torn.

After *Rugby 2004*, this is destined to please all those rugby fans who found the original, well, shit. For those that played EA's ho-hummer for more than the length of an actual game (ie: 80 mins), we predict *World Championship Rugby* may well end up knocking you senseless, which would obviously be appropriate. Just as long as there are injuries included, we'd be more than happy to reply the World Cup. Without arms, old Jonny would be as useful as a handle-free steak knife.



HOW HE DO DAT? So posh, they can jump extra-high.



GET IN THERE Replicating a scrum is a tough job.



LINE OUT Catch the ball. We understand that much.

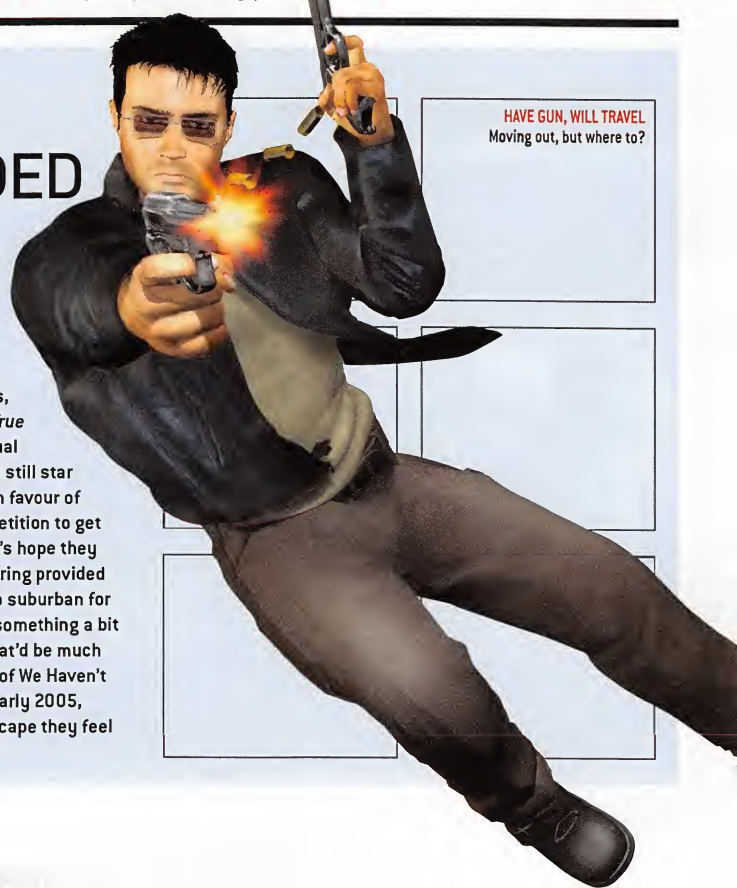
CITY SLICKER

TRUE CRIME GETS RELOADED

ACTIVISION GEARS UP FOR A SECOND CRIME SPREE.

IN A MOVE THAT SHOULD SURPRISE ONLY

those who are fooled by the old 'I've pulled your nose off, here it is in my hand', or the 'here's a coin I've found behind your ear' tricks, Activision has let slip it's making a sequel to *True Crime: Streets of LA* and wants to build an actual franchise. The next instalment of the saga will still star ballsy 'tec Nick Kang, but it'll move out of LA in favour of other, presumably US, city destinations. Our petition to get Redfern in there hasn't worked, obviously. Let's hope they provide a contrast to the rather bland adventuring provided by the City of Angels, which seemed a mite too suburban for our liking. Oh, and if they could come up with something a bit different to *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* then that'd be much appreciated too. Expect 'True Crime 2: Streets of We Haven't Decided Yet' to appear by the end of 2004 or early 2005, depending on how many square miles of cityscape they feel like sticking in there.



HAVE GUN, WILL TRAVEL
Moving out, but where to?



KEEP ON MOVIN'

NEW DETAILS SURFACE ON SONY'S PSP!

THE SPECS FOR SONY'S PORTABLE ARE FINALISED – OR ARE THEY?

THERE'S TROUBLE BREWING BETWEEN SONY AND prospective game developers for the company's PlayStation Portable (PSP). The current memory spec of 8MB RAM just isn't enough, claim developers currently in discussion with Sony – and they're already asking if more memory can be added to the system.

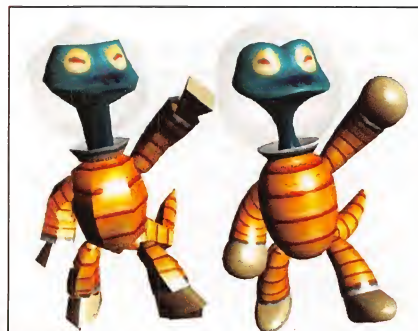
Apparently 8MB is only a quarter of what PS2 uses, leaving developers with some big technical headaches.

Thankfully, recent conversations with PSP developers have suggested that Sony might buckle to ensure the PSP is the most developer-friendly platform as possible. If so, expect a mountain of PS2 conversions, which, as we all know, would not be a bad thing.

Either way, at least PSP looks like being compatible with PlayStation3, a source working on PS3 hardware recently let slip, along with news that the wireless Dual Shock 3 controller (with dual trigger buttons!) will work on both machines.

Developers reckon the PSP stands up pretty well against PS2's graphics power and processing – not that you could tell from the first images (see below) released by Sony. But even the top studios haven't yet been given specialist development kits, and are having to develop games for the handheld using PC emulation kits. But almost all of the big names are gearing up to release PSP games. *FIFA* publisher Electronic Arts, *Tony Hawk's* publisher Activision and *WWE SmackDown!* publisher THQ have all signed up, as well as a host of Sony internal development teams. A recent slip by a Sony rep suggests that *WipeOut* might be one of the first games to be released. Look out for more info next month.

Chris Deering, SCEE president, also revealed in a recent interview that Europe will be in line to receive PSPs in November of this year. Although, considering the supposed dearth of software and rumoured lack of connectivity with current appliances (including PS2), we're prepared to wait.



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE No, it's not PSP compared to PS2. It's what the PS2 can do with simple figures when it wants to jazz 'em up. Nice one, Sony.

BABYSITTING

ANGELS MAKE ONLINE SAFE

ONLINE GETS MODERATED. CONCERNED PARENTS GET SLEEP.

HAVE YOU BEEN ABUSED IN YOUR ONLINE EXPLOITS? CHEATED OUT OF A HARD-EARNED VICTORY? BEEN PICKED UP by a paedophile? No? Us neither. Anyway, if you had, these experiences are now nothing more than residents of the past, thanks to Sony's decision to moderate their PS2 Network communities. They've gone ahead and grabbed a telephone game hints company called Sirius to manage this scheme, allowing parents to sleep easily, happy in the knowledge that their precious daughter is not a camping little shit. Nic Foster, IT & Finance Director at SCE Australia had this to say: "Sirius provides our online customers with a high level of support that is best described as community management. The services range from monitoring for belligerent players who ruin the game experience for others, to more technical support such as assisting customers with router and wi-fi set-ups." For those experiencing any problems online, these people appear to be what you've been needing. Managing Director of Sirius, Roger Mason describes his company's responsibility: "Many people of all ages are joining online communities such as PlayStation 2

Network Entertainment, our role as moderators

is to help manage this group of people, ensuring a harmonious, safe and problem free experience. We've already been nicknamed 'Sony's Angels' a reference we regard as a compliment." We've decided to nickname them 'Barnacle Bill's Bearded Banjo Band'. How can you resist?

GAMES GALORE

PS2 ON TOP OF THE WORLD

SONY SELLS ENOUGH PS2 GAMES TO STRETCH HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD!

SONY REACHED A HISTORIC landmark this month with the sale of the 150,000,000th PlayStation2 game. Almost 50 million games were shipped in October and November alone in a bid to cope with the phenomenal Christmas rush. Sony boffins – who clearly have nothing better to do – have since asserted that the discs laid end to end would stretch halfway around the world. Suffice to say, it's a significant achievement, one that marks PS2 as a clear candidate for the most successful home console in history. With sales of the machine at an all-time high and nearly two full years of shelf-life ahead before Sony unleashes PlayStation3, PSW predicts a full circuit of the globe to be completed some time within the next couple of years.

The upsurge in sales is a clear

reflection of the outstanding quality of the games released over the previous six months. Titles such as *WWE SmackDown! Here Comes the Pain*, *Pro Evolution Soccer 3*, *Tony Hawk's Underground*, *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* and *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun* have all contributed to this staggering upturn. And the good news is, the more games you buy, the more games they'll make, leading to a broader selection of titles in the future and to a healthier level of competition between developers vying for an ever-larger chunk of the action.

Sony now predicts that the average player owns around six games and has estimated that PS2's 700-strong library of titles will have been bolstered by the

arrival of an extra 70 at Christmas last year. Report to page 50 immediately for PSW's pick of the biggest and brightest games of 2004.

The news comes at an important time for PlayStation2, with Xbox gradually gaining momentum and the console war becoming more heated. Although the outcome of this particular battle has never been in question, it's nevertheless gratifying to know that our machine of choice is continuing to grow at such a frightening rate. Finally, we'd like to thank you, dear PSW reader, on Sony's behalf. After all, PS2 couldn't have straddled the globe without you. Allow yourself a wry smirk and an extra ten minutes in bed tomorrow morning. We know we will.



INTERVIEW

PHIL HARRISON

PSW SPOKE TO EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT OF SONY EUROPE AT THE AUSTRALIAN GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE LATE LAST YEAR IN MELBOURNE. TWO UNANNOUNCED FOR 2004? EYETOY 2? PSP? AYE.

PSW: What can we expect to see for the rest of the PS2's life, and can you offer any games to look out for?

Phil: It's astonishing that people are starting to talk or even think about the end of the PS2 life cycle, whereas I just think we're only beginning.

PSW: Well, you're going to sell more PS2s and games, but there's no innovation!

Phil: 'Course there is!

PSW: Is there?

Phil: Yeah. 'Course there is. I think next week is the third anniversary of PlayStation 2 in Europe and Australia – November 25th – and, three years in, we're at 60-odd million machines worldwide, over a million in Australia. So we've just got to what I consider to be critical mass. We are now ready to exploit that critical mass. Innovation is coming in in piles. On pure game-side, not hardcore games specifically, but very much in the game category, we are putting more products into development now on PS2 than ever before. We're going to have something like 35 games come out next year. We've got 60 in active development right now, which is more than we've ever had. That's before we even get to the PSP, EyeToy, and seeing other products that will have multiple skews. In terms of innovation, I don't know whether you've had a chance to see EyeToy or what your thoughts are.

PSW: I love EyeToy. But from a more committed gamer's perspective, do you think the aging technology does inhibit innovation?

Phil: No, not at all. If you look at some of the games that are coming out this Christmas, developers are really starting to get to grips with the PS2 hardware.



means developers can push the machine in different ways. You'll see some developers focusing more on physics, or simulation, behaviour and less on graphics, or you'll see some developers pushing graphics. We've got a game coming out next year called *Killzone*. It's been in development for three years, so this is actually the developer's first PS2 title, but it has taken a lot of investment and time to get to this point. And if you give people time and money and technology they can do amazing things. And that's before we start adding the additional perspective of online, and what exactly that will bring to game design, what that will bring to business models, what that will bring to communities of players, quite apart from any technical or creative innovations in the games themselves.

PSW: Is online a development priority or is it more a long-term goal that will slowly be incorporated?

Phil: It is a priority. We want to deliver as many online games as makes sense. Not every kind of game will make sense to have an online feature. In some games the online functionality will be a strategic and central part of the game design. In some games it will be an additional feature that brings some benefit but it will vary from title to title. I think it's fair to say the success we've had so far with the online is just the beginning. We're not by any means 'done' and we're just starting to get some critical mass around the world. If you look at

PSW: Is the PSP simply a gaming platform or something more?

Phil: What is absolutely essential to the design of PSP is that it's a mobile network device. It happens to be focused at games but it is fundamentally a mobile network device. The proliferation of WiFi now around the world, not just on a peer-to-peer basis but on a hotspot basis will drive each other. We're going to drive the adoption of WiFi and WiFi is going to enable lots of applications on PSP. We met with Paul Lucas, the Queensland Minister for Innovation and Information Economy, and in Brisbane there are 20 overlapping WiFi hotspots sponsored by the government to cover the entire central business district. That's just one government doing one thing, that's before private enterprise gets involved in it. In addition to WiFi you've got a USB and IrDa for other low-data exchange communication. One of the coolest things about PSP by the way is that you can use it as a TV remote control, but that's a different issue. IrDa for small bursts of data. No reason why you can't have a PSP communicating with a mobile phone, or communicating with a subway gate, or communicating with a bus ticket for you. Then, with USB, you can have game stores acting as download centers for additional levels. Go into your local EB, plug your PSP into their USB kiosk and download a new level onto memory stick.

PSW: 2004 for PS2. What can we expect?

Phil: Best software catalogue we have ever had. Including the history of PS one and PS2. Not just from ourselves but from our third-parties as well. We have two major titles launching in 2004 we have not even announced or shown the world. Which we will be announcing in January or February which will blow people away. I know that because I'm working on both of them. They are two of the most exciting things – one of which is a sequel, one of which is a totally brand new product and franchise that nobody will have seen before.

PSW: Online at all?

Phil: One of them does, one of them doesn't. In addition to those two new titles we have got three new EyeToy products two of which are not games, one of which is. We have got our core franchises that you'd expect. *GT4* coming out, *WRC4*, *Formula One 2004*, all of which will be the best of breed in their particular genre. We have got *SOCOM 2* coming out, we've got *Syphon Filter* coming out, we'll have *Killzone*, which I think will be absolutely ginormous. *Rise to Honour*. And we will have a sequel *Jak and Daxter*.

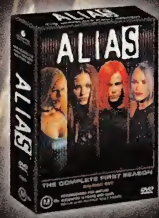
PSW: You mentioned the EyeToy and the two non-games coming up for it. Will they be at all communications-focused. Plug and play videoconferencing kind of stuff and can we expect that kind of product coming in for PlayStation any time soon?

Phil: As you would expect we are planning broad applications for EyeToy but I am not going to tell you exactly what they are this time. But I don't think it will be a million miles away from things you discussed then.

“WE HAVE 2 MAJOR TITLES LAUNCHING IN 2004 WE HAVE NOT EVEN ANNOUNCED.”

By no means are they maxing it out. And despite what anybody will ever try to tell you, it's impossible to max out the PS2, because of the wide variety of ways in which you can architect software on the machine. I'm sure you're going to sit down with some developers who are going to say 'oh this is the most powerful game engine on PS2'. The true statement is that 'this is the most powerful game engine for that game on PS2' because there's no such thing as a maximum. On PS one, you could actually achieve a theoretical maximum because of highly efficient coding really getting as good as you could get, but on PS2 that will never happen. So that

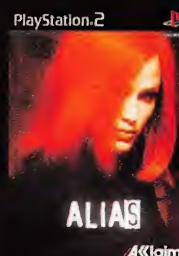
the US where they have been deployed for longer than we have here in PAL and certainly longer than in Australia. Games like *SOCOM 2*, which just shipped a couple of weeks ago – in its first week of release clocked up over 2.5 million game hours. That's an astonishing number. And it's just continuing to grow from there. Microsoft just happened to make an announcement that coincided with *SOCOM* about the total number of users that they've had in a single day on the entire Xbox Live service. We now beat that just by *SOCOM 2* on its own.



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PlayStation²



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GLOBAL EXTRA >>

ALL THE LATEST ON THE BIGGEST PLAYSTATION2 GAMES ON YOUR SHORT-RANGE RADAR.



WE WENT RIGHT A larger map is handy for chases.



WORK IT Simple switch and lever puzzles break up the gung-ho action.



BAD LOSER When his final \$1 was eaten by the pokey, suicide was considered.

HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION

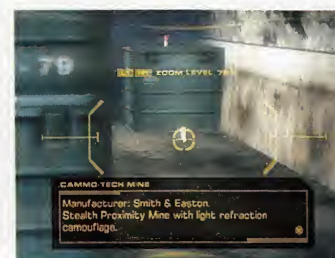
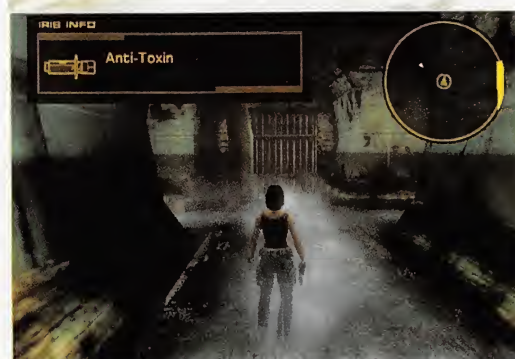
AFTER DREAMCAST BEGINNINGS, SEGA'S ANSWER TO *METAL GEAR* HAS EVOLVED AND IS READY TO DEPLOY A NEW RECIPE OF SLINKY UNDERGROUND ANTI-TERROR.

> PUBLISHER
> GENRE
> OUT

SEGA
ACTION ADVENTURE
MARCH

WHEN *HEADHUNTER* ORIGINALLY HIT THE SHELVES, IT WAS the next best thing to a bit of *Metal Gear Solid*. Since then, almost a billion stealth games have arrived, tugging at the hem of *Metal Gear*'s coat-tails like a greedy tramp. The one shining light that sets *Headhunter: Redemption* apart from its rivals is that it has a unique Swedish-developed flavour, prompting comparisons to everything from *Blade Runner* to *Terminator*. Although Sweden has given us a trouser-quivering army of globe-straddling supermodels, they've not given us any world-class games as yet. It's about time they did, we reckon. We've got enough perky treats to be going on with, thank you very much.

New enemies include a whole breed of robotic spiders which scuttle, attack and eventually detonate themselves causing massive damage. Spookily, they move just like the real eight-legged things despite having only four legs. Newly unveiled gadgets include proximity stealth mines and a high-tech sniper rifle that features ultra-telescopic levels of zoom. With the dual reality of a sprawling cyber-town and criminal underworld literally located beneath sea level, *Headhunter: Redemption* offers masses of land to explore on motorcycle or foot and adds a femme fatal boss to rival ladykiller heroine Leeza. And, remember, that's Leeza with a double 'e' and a 'z'. Forget it and she'll blow your head off for being rude. Expect a full review shortly.





KILLZONE

THE RUMOURS CAN STOP. PSW HAS PLAYED 2004'S BEST SHOOTER AND IT'S GOING TO DESTROY EVERYTHING IN ITS PATH.

> PUBLISHER
> GENRE
> OUT

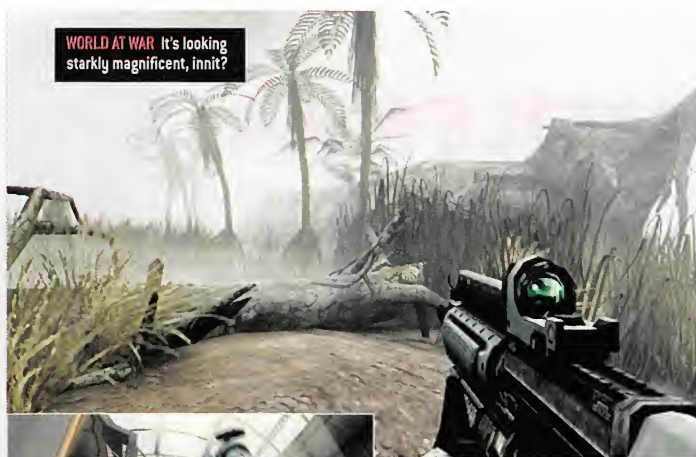
SONY
SHOOTER
SEPTEMBER

THE FEVER FOR INFORMATION ON SONY'S TOP SECRET HALO-BOTHERING SHOOTER

has reached boiling point. The good news is that you're holding the magazine which, in turn, is holding an actual copy of the game itself. We shit you not.

We have *Killzone*. Repeat, we have *Killzone*. We will exclusively reveal everything this remarkable game has to offer next month in both the magazine and DVD. You simply cannot afford to miss it.

In the meantime, we can tease you a little. A brilliant shooting gallery opens the game as a training level, showcasing the devastating power of the assault rifles and floor-mounted cannons. The enemies move in formation, ducking and running towards targets to throw you off balance. In the game itself, the kooky glare of enemies wearing head-mounted orange goggles pulse as they inspect each room thoroughly. Are they human, are they alien? We can't tell you just yet. But stick with *PSW* and you can find out every single juicy detail, along with astonishing, digital quality footage of 2004's most important game. Do not miss this.



NIGHTSHADE

PROTECT TOKYO FROM DEMON WARLORDS AND SAVE THE WORLD IN NOTHING BUT A PVC SUIT AND RUBBER GLOVES.

> PUBLISHER
> GENRE
> OUT

SEGA
ACTION
FEBRUARY

PSW FIRST UNCOVERED NIGHTSHADE

when it went under the perplexing name of *Kunoichi*. As a sequel to *Shinobi*, *Kunoichi* is actually the name of the new heroine who takes over from where *Shinobi* left off. The benefits of a female assassin are many. *Kunoichi* is faster than *Shinobi* and can jump higher, which means a lot in the

land of superhero ninjas. Especially when Hell has literally broken loose and its inhabitants are intent on killing young Japanese commuters as soon as they awake from their love hotels.

This time around, not only do you face an army of evil robo-soldiers but the gateway between Hell and Tokyo has been opened, with demons treating Tokyo as politely as your typical 17-year old Mosmanite school-leaver treats Byron Bay in December. Full review to follow shortly.



CASTLEVANIA

A BUFFY-WORRYING BLOODBATH FEATURING THOUSANDS OF VAMPS AND ONE SLAYER.

> PUBLISHER
> GENRE
> OUT

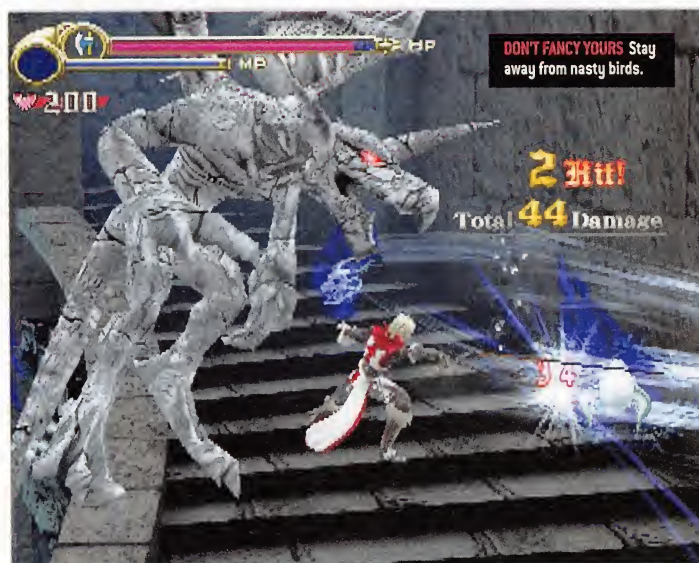
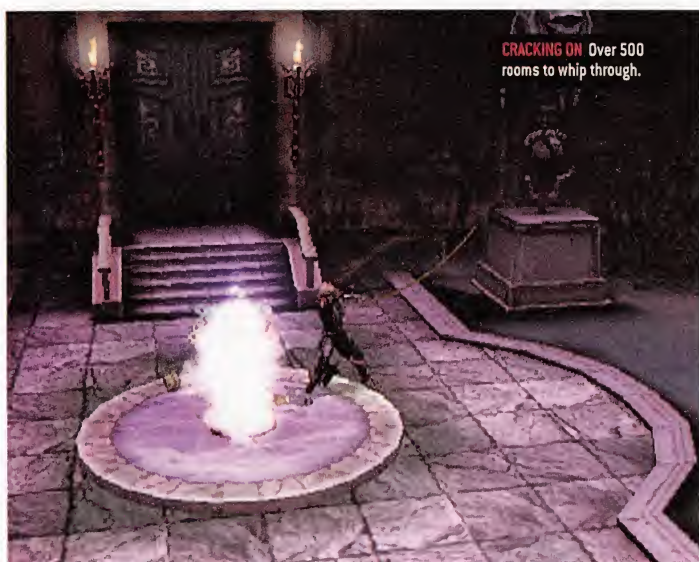
KONAMI
ACTION
FEBRUARY

THE ROLE OF A VAMPIRE SLAYER IS A TYPICALLY MACHO

profession, matched in danger only by the SAS and Jacko's bodyguards. Leon Belmont isn't a hard-sounding name, or a title that's likely to scare bloodsucking vampires.

Camp name aside, Leon is the first member of the original Belmont family, renowned for slaying on game machines so old they didn't use CDs. *Castlevania* is the backbone for the aged series, and turns a classic 2D platformer into an enhanced action adventure. Whips and swords are freely available alongside traditional vamp deterrents such as daggers, crucifixes and er, a large axe. Like Buffy, Leon can cast spells and pull off attacks that his weak biceps could previously only dream of.

Featuring a classical music score and gothic influences that your pasty-faced sister would kill for, it's time to pick up a stake and bust some hearts. Look out for the full review next month.



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DIALOGUE

THE PART OF THE MAGAZINE YOU WRITE, THEN WE TYPE IT UP IN THE CONDUIT ITC FONT AND PUBLISH IT ALL.

THE TWELVE DAYS OF XMAS

On the first day of Christmas Sony gave to me, *Metal Gear Solid 3*.

On the second day of Christmas Sony gave to me, two Memory Cards and *Metal Gear Solid 3*.

On the third day of Christmas, Sony gave to me, three *Grand Theft Autos*, two Memory Cards and *Metal Gear Solid 3*.

On the fourth day of Christmas, Sony gave to me, four *Tony Hawk's Undergrounds*, three *Grand Theft Autos*, two Memory Cards and *Metal Gear Solid 3*.

On the fifth day of Christmas, Sony gave to me, five see-thru controllers, four *Tony Hawk's Undergrounds*, three *Grand Theft Autos*, two Memory Cards and *Metal Gear Solid 3*.

On the sixth day of Christmas, Sony gave to me, six *Prince of Persias*, five see-thru controllers, four *Tony Hawk's Undergrounds*, three *Grand Theft Autos*, two Memory Cards and *Metal Gear Solid 3*.

On the seventh day of Christmas, Sony gave to me, seven *Need for Speeds*, six *Prince of Persias*, five see-thru controllers, four *Tony Hawk's Undergrounds*, three *Grand Theft Autos*, two Memory Cards and *Metal Gear Solid 3*.

On the eighth day of Christmas, Sony gave to me, eight *Return of the Kings*, seven *Need for Speeds*, six *Prince of Persias*, five see-thru controllers,

four *Tony Hawk's Undergrounds*, three *Grand Theft Autos*, two Memory Cards and *Metal Gear Solid 3*.

On the ninth day of Christmas, Sony gave to me, nine *Final Fantasies*, eight *Return of the Kings*, seven *Need for Speeds*, six *Prince of Persias*, five see-thru controllers, four *Tony Hawk's Undergrounds*, three *Grand Theft Autos*, two Memory Cards and *Metal Gear Solid 3*.

On the tenth day of Christmas, Sony gave to me, ten *Jak and Daxters*, nine *Final Fantasies*, eight *Return of the Kings*, seven *Need for Speeds*, six *Prince of Persias*, five see-thru controllers, four *Tony Hawk's Undergrounds*, three *Grand Theft Autos*, two Memory Cards and *Metal Gear Solid 3*.

On the eleventh day of Christmas, Sony gave to me, eleven *Sonic Heroes*, ten *Jak and Daxters*, nine *Final Fantasies*, eight *Return of the Kings*, seven *Need for Speeds*, six *Prince of Persias*, five see-thru controllers, four *Tony Hawk's Undergrounds*, three *Grand Theft Autos*, two Memory Cards and *Metal Gear Solid 3*.

On the twelfth day of Christmas, Sony gave to me, twelve *Splinter Cells*, eleven *Sonic Heroes*, ten

SEND YOUR THOUGHTS TO:
Dialogue, PSW,
78 Renwick St,
Redfern NSW 2016
Australia.
OR...
psw@next.com.au

Jak and Daxters, nine *Final Fantasies*, eight *Return of the Kings*, seven *Need for Speeds*, six *Prince of Persias*, five see-thru controllers, four *Tony Hawk's Undergrounds*, three *Grand Theft Autos*, two Memory Cards and *Metal Gear Solid 3*.

Louie Willacy-Ruhn,
Otaki New Zealand

Louie actually wrote out the whole thing. No abbreviations. We thought we'd have to print it. Fortunately, we had Work Experience Girl on hand to type it out for us. If she wasn't here we wouldn't have. It's simply that mildly good.

XBOXOPHOBIA

After the two years of owning my precious PlayStation 2, something has been feasting on my insides and it has left me with nightmares of a big black and green monster. After I read Issue 18, when you interviewed those people about how long PS2 has left, I went out of my dungeon (you would call a room) - which contains only a mattress, a thin sheet, a TV and a PS2 - to ask all the people I know how long the PS2 has left, and all of them said between 1 to 2 years! Then I asked them if they are going to purchase a PS3 or an Xbox 2 that are rumoured to come out late 2005! I was horrified to hear that they all said Xbox 2. One of them said 'it has better graphics!' I am scared PSW! Help me rid my bad case of Xboxophobia! [Runs away from computer in tears!]

PS Is it true that the PS3 will only cost \$99?

From your humble and loyal worshipper and servant, Nick Andrushenko

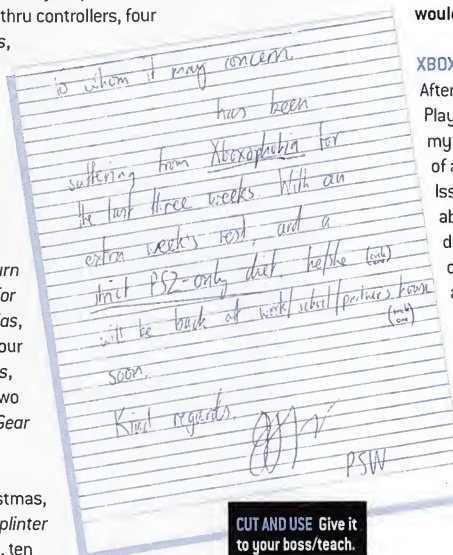
Nick, try two teaspoons of *GT4*, followed by a mouthful of *Killzone* and three tablets of *MGS3*. Sure, it only treats the symptoms, but Xboxophobia passes through the system without harm over time. Just remember to get plenty of rest. And PS2. If necessary, please use the accompanying note - it was the Work Experience Girl's doing again, so please excuse the handwriting. And no, the PS3 will cost more than \$99.

GONNA LIVE FOREVER

I was just reading your review of *True Crime* (very good it was too) and I noticed a strange screenshot on page 73 (the one with the driven-over guy flying into the screen), where the car that Nick Kang was driving's number plate read 'PSW RIP!'. Is this a sign that the almighty PSW is coming to an end?

Ben Ellis, via email

Everything's OK. We were just going through a bit of a bad time. Personal issues. I've had a bit of a cry and feel better now. Sorry to scare you.



CUT AND USE Give it to your boss/teach.



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THE GAFFER RETURNS

The Gaffer is a little upset. The Gaffer writes in to get answers and The Gaffer gets insulted. Anyway that matters not. The Gaffer has no story today so The Gaffer will keep this message short and to the point as best The Gaffer can.

The Gaffer likes chocolate!

http://www.cadbury.com.au/lotrrotk/EA_Voucher.PDF

This link will allow you to download and print a discount voucher to get 10% off the Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King game.

Yes this is legit!

The Gaffer found this on the back of one of the precious chocolates The Gaffer likes to eat. Anyway if the link don't work visit cadbury.com.au

The Gaffer is here to help you PSW readers. Maybe he won't get insulted this time round. If anyone else has things like this to report do so.

Is promoting the Cadbury website illegal?

More Stories when they arise.

The Gaffer signing off.

PS. Read the instructions on the website for the terms and conditions. The voucher can't be used at all stores so don't shoot The Gaffer down if the store don't accept the voucher.

Cheers Gaf, we'll hear from you again soon, no doubt. And nope, nothing illegal there. If anything, it's undeserved Cadbury advertising. Or pointless rant.



THE HORNET'S NEST

I do not want this letter to be published in the magazine. I am merely giving you information on *Metal Gear Solid 3* and my suggestion is that you write an article compiling all of these theories together. The new *Metal Gear* is based on a hornet and will, therefore, possibly be called *Metal Gear Hornet*. How do I know this? In the second trailer that was shown at both ECTS and the Tokyo Game Show, there is a silhouette of the Metal Gear transformed with the words "Honeyed Espionage" over it. Honey. Hornets like honey do they not? At the very end of the E3 trailer, Snake is swatting hornets with his knife. Symbolic of his later battle with Metal Gear Hornet surely? Everyone knows what the new Metal Gear (or one of them) will look like thanks to the paper model that was made available on an E3 pamphlet. Notice that it has little feelers on the front? Well, this tank-like mech transforms into a hornet-like mech: Metal Gear Hornet. Are we seeing a pattern here? The new Metal Gear is without doubt, based on a hornet. Whether it will actually be called Metal Gear Hornet remains to be seen. Oh, and just call me... Konami Spy.

Konami Spy, via email

Psst, Konami Spy, we don't want to piss on your parade, but didn't you realise that the new *Metal Gear* game has already got a name? It's called *Snake Eater*. So doesn't that kinda make this 300-word conspiracy theory somewhat redundant? We think so. Still, good effort.

IF YOU CAN'T DO THE RHYME...

Yo, yo, yo, kill the beat!

I hear people saying that games are bad, Don't listen to those dogs, they're just mad. They ain't played games in their whole damn life, They read The Mail and sit at home with their wife. I play games and I dig the WWE, I'm not psycho or retarded, it ain't affected me. I'll admit I'm a fan of my main man John Cena, But he has no affect on my actions or demeanour. People need to stop interfering and let us be, Gamers of the world unite and stand with me. Enjoy your games and don't feel like an outcast, We are the new generation and live life fast. Don't like what I'm saying? You're outta luck, You know what, I don't give a f***! P.S. I'm 30 years old.

David Cull, via email

Don't you have adult things to be doing Mr Cull? Shouldn't you be liaising with telecommunications firms apropos your erroneous bill dated October 3? Isn't there a new shed to be creosoted? A naughty child to be smacked? If we're honest with you David, we think it's time you ventured outside the confines of bean-bagged rumpus room and strode manfully into the real world. You'll never get laid at this rate.

WINNERS

Rah Rah

James Newbery
Sam Bridgeman
David Milne
J. Stewart
Baden Shipp
Kevin Mak
Seamus Cavenagh
Toby Sheen
Angela Cotton
Owen Taylor

Soft Free Touch Play

Lee Henry
Blair Voitkevich
N.T. & A. Anderson
Ken Brackens
Stewart Barton

Princely

Jared Mallia
Omega (Daniel)
Glenn van Ruiswyk
Michael Larkin
Jerome Doyle

Snap

John Lombard
Dustin Hayes
Kevin Routledge
Philippa Croft
Stacy Farrell

40 000 Reasons

Major Winner
Mr. Rain Plot

Winners

David Polo
W. Narsamma
Shane Satter
James Merritt

GfK Charts

| Rank | Product | Genre | Publisher |
|------|-----------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 1 | ◆ Rugby League | Sports | Tru Blu |
| 2 | ◆ Need For Speed: Underground | Racing | Electronic Arts |
| 3 | ▲ Cricket 2004 | Sports | Electronic Arts |
| 4 | ▼ Lord Of The Rings Return King | Adventure | Electronic Arts |
| 5 | ◆ Eyetoy: Play | Compilation | Sony |
| 6 | ▲ Simpson's Hit & Run | Adventure | Fox Interactive |
| 7 | ▼ Medal Of Honor Rising Sun | Action | Electronic Arts |
| 8 | ▼ GTA Twin Pack | Adventure | Rockstar |
| 9 | ▲ Manhunt | Adventure | Rockstar |
| 10 | ▼ True Crime: Streets Of LA | Adventure | Activision |
| 11 | ▲ The Sims Bustin' Out | Strategy | Electronic Arts |
| 12 | ▼ GTA: Vice City | Adventure | Rockstar |
| 13 | ▼ Tony Hawk Underground | Sports | Activision |
| 14 | ▲ Mega 4 Pack Of Games | Compilation | Acclaim |
| 15 | ▲ Ratchet & Clank 2 | Adventure | Sony |
| 16 | ▼ Dragonball Z: Budokai 2 | Action | Atari |
| 17 | ▲ Crash Nitro Kart | Racing | Vivendi |
| 18 | ▼ WWE Smackdown Here Comes Pain | Sports | THQ |
| 19 | ▼ Prince Of Persia: Sands Of Time | Adventure | Ubi Soft |
| 20 | ★ Finding Nemo | Adventure | THQ |

- ★ New Entry
- ◆ Non Mover
- ▲ Up from last week
- ▼ Down from last week

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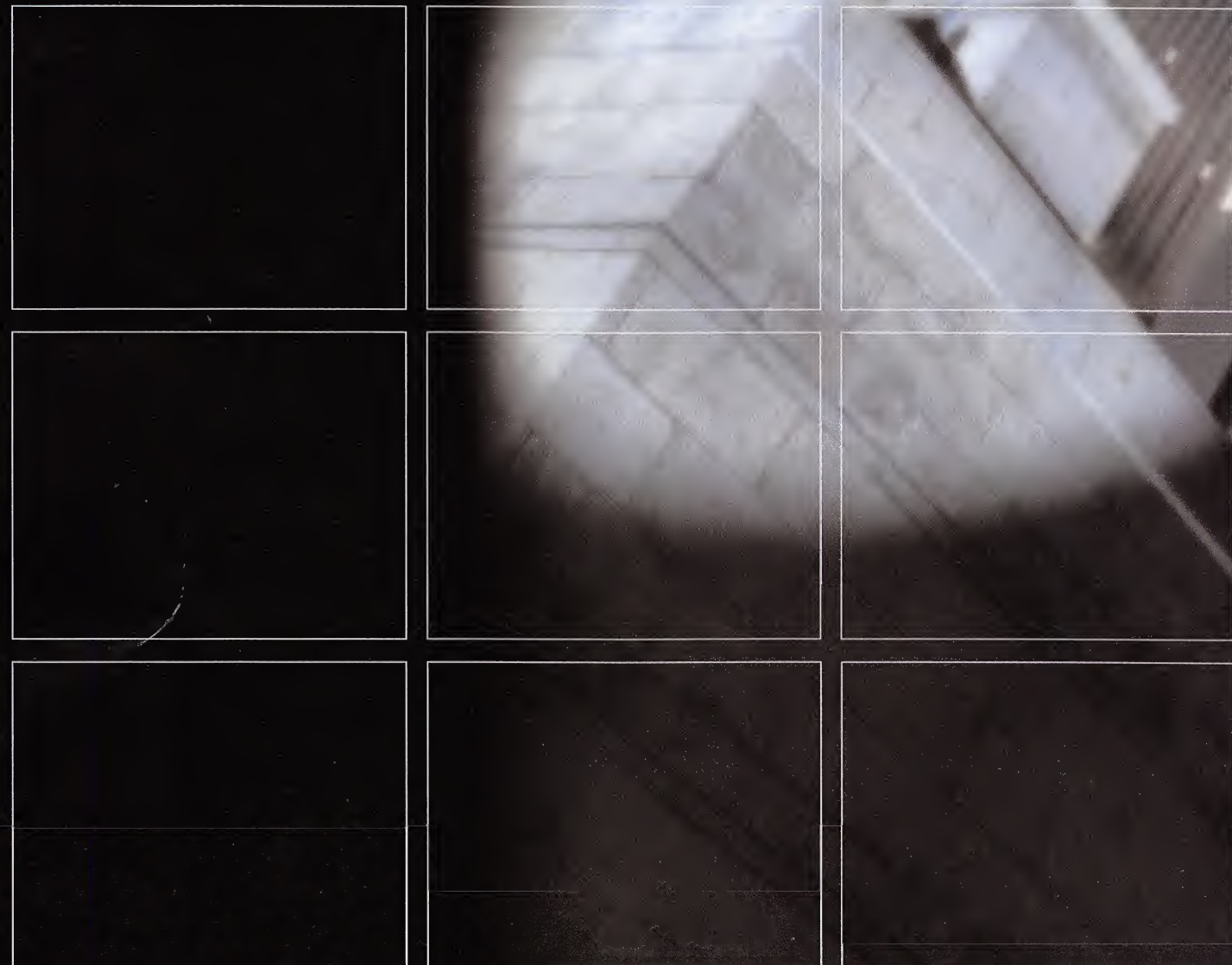
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*Online game play for Medal Of Honor™ Rising Sun and Need For Speed™ Underground available for the PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system only. Online play requires Internet connection and Network Adaptor for PlayStation 2 (sold separately). Online game play also available for Need For Speed™ Underground on PC.
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RAINBOW SIX 3

ATTENTION! THE FOLLOWING MATERIAL IS SO SECRET, WE ADVISE YOU TO WIPE YOUR OWN BRAIN IMMEDIATELY AFTER READING. INTEL ON THE WORLD'S MOST AUTHENTIC SHOOTER FOLLOWS...

| | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| > GENRE | TACTICAL SHOOTING |
| > DEVELOPER | UBISOFT |
| > PUBLISHER | UBISOFT |
| > OUT | MARCH |

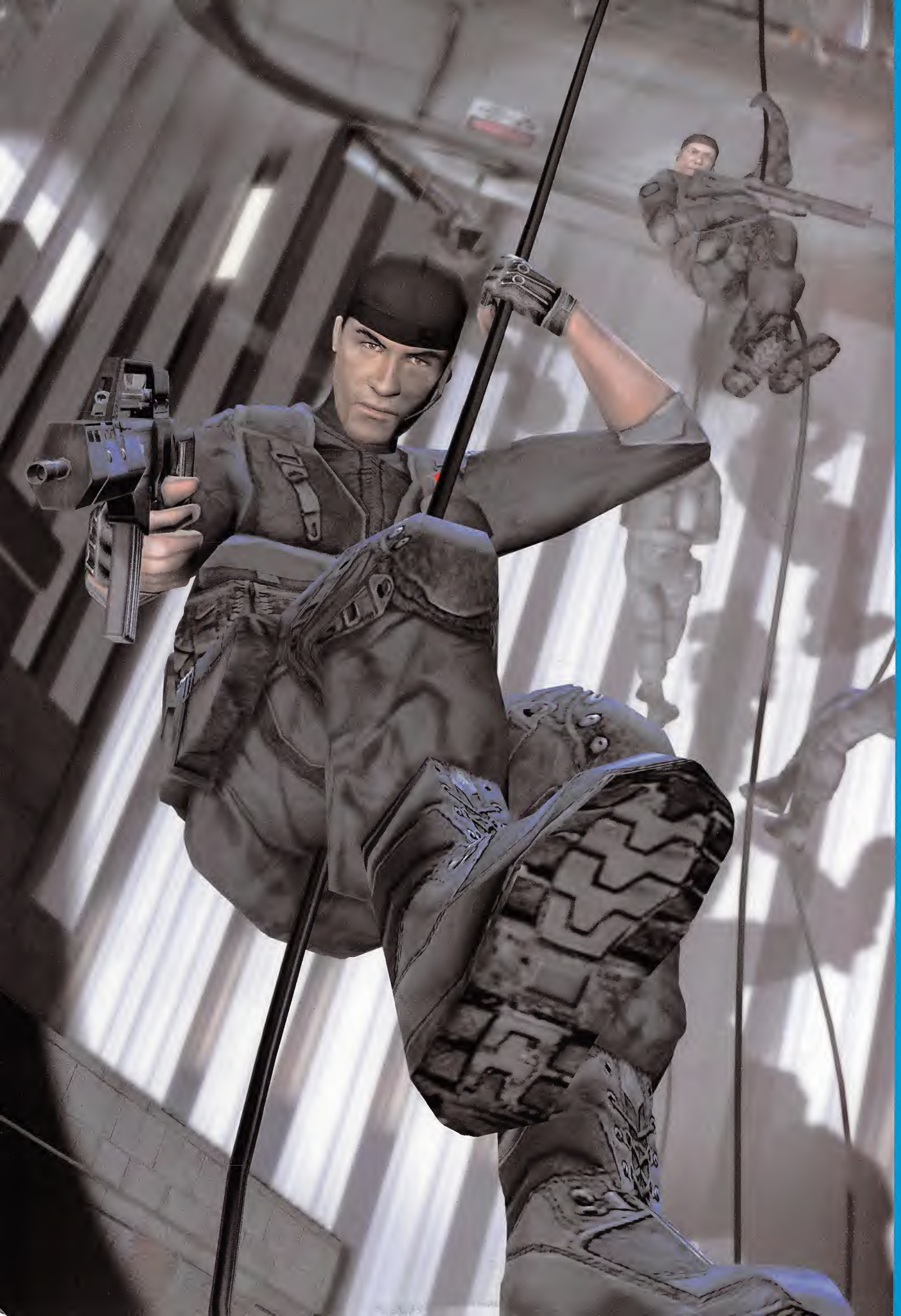
AS YOU CAST YOUR EYE OVER THE following pages, keep this in mind. There are people who do this for a living, just like normal people drive cabs or flip burgers. People who earn their keep rescuing civilians from hostage situations and winning back entire buildings from terrorist control. And these madmen don't use fancy gadgets like fictional pretty-boy ops Sam Fisher and Solid Snake. They don't have nanotechnology, stealth suits, invisibility cloaks, lovely Chinese ladies flirting with them over the com line, controllable robots or psychic powers. All they've got

are radios and guns. Oh, and minds trained to think in ways that would have most civilians' brains bleeding out of their ears. They're tactically trained professionals who aren't that keen on getting shot, because they won't just lose a sliver of their health bar, they'll lose an arm. If you've ever wondered what it must have been like to actually be, say, a member of the SAS storming the Iranian Embassy in 1980, then *Rainbow Six 3* is for you.

In short, *Rainbow Six 3* is *Ghost Recon*'s mad mate and *Splinter Cell*'s thuggish cousin. Whereas *Splinter Cell* is

all about one man versus an entire complex full of potential death, the purpose of the Rainbow Six team is subtly different. It's about securing areas. If the term 'securing' sounds a little abstract, feel free to replace it with 'killing everyone', because that's what it means. You won't be creeping past a lot of guards here. Believe us, when the Rainbow Six team hits a trouble spot, everybody knows about it. That's not to say you'll be sending terrorists posh greetings cards before you turn up, of course.

The idea is to progress from room to room, emptying every area of



"IT'S SO SECRET WE'RE NOT EVEN SURE IF THEY KNOW WHO THEY ARE"



enemies, without anyone else finding out about it. But the minute you enter a new location, you'll have to kill or incapacitate everyone in there or they'll do the same to you. It's just like real life. OK, it's not actually *just* like real life, but it's what happens when real-life situations are taken out back and clubbed into the shape of mad entertainment.

BAGSIE THE BIG GUN

You play through the narrowed eyes of Ding 'Yes, Ding, My Parents Hated Me I

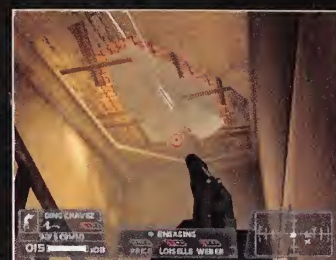


Suppose Chavez, second only to the legendary Jack Ryan himself in the Clancy-verse League of Hard Cases. But you're not alone. Backing you up are three other luminaries, the very cream of the SAS, the German GSG9 and whatever the French have that passes for special ops. The Rainbow Six team is a 'black ops' kind of outfit, so secret we're not even sure if *they* know who they are. They don't really exist, of course. They're the product of Tom Clancy's mind. But then, if they did you wouldn't know about it. They're that kind of mob.

You'll have to tell the others what to do, but the management side of things shouldn't diminish the rush too much. Your three compadres can be pretty much left to their own devices, and they're experts at using cover to stay alive. You won't find yourself cursing as one of your computer buddies alerts a whole base or gets himself shot up, nor will you have to command them in every

little thing. Using a USB voice mic or an elegantly simple onscreen interface, you can give them orders to breach doors, regroup or attack. If you don't, they'll cover your ass or sneak around silently depending on the situation. Even shooting's been made easy. You can automatically hit anything in your gun's targeting circle, which will increase in size if you stand still. It's auto-aim, sure, but it lets you know just what you can get away with.

As we've made abundantly clear, your objective is not to retrieve a piece of vital data or sneak someone out of a compound without causing too much trouble. It's to shut down the enemy stronghold completely. You accomplish this just like it happens in real life, one room at a time. And the central dynamic to *Rainbow Six 3* is what happens when you open a door. If that sounds pretty lame, consider this. The minute you enter a new room of an enemy-controlled



area, the most likely thing that will happen is your immediate death from the automatic weaponry of the bloodthirsty terrorists hiding inside. If one man went into a room filled with these people in real life, he'd be cut down before he could scream. So you need a bit of know-how if you're going to survive.

For a start, you need those three other people. One not-so-lucky bastard gets to open the door. The minute he's slammed it open, he shoots ahead. On one side of

SHUT THAT DOOR!

HOW THE HELL DO YOU CLEAN OUT A NEST OF BLOOD-DRINKING TERROR-MONGERS? WE SHOW YOU.



- 1 THE FIRST OPERATIVE THROWS IN A FRAG GRENADE TO CREATE INSTANT CHAOS.
- 2 THIS FELLA'S HERE TO COVER THE CENTRAL AREA OF THE ROOM FROM ENEMY FIRE.
- 3 HE'S NOT A COWARD - HE'S MAKING SURE NOBODY CAN ATTACK FROM THE RIGHT.
- 4 ANY SOUND FROM OUTSIDE AND ENEMIES WILL BE ALERTED BEFORE YOU OPEN THE DOOR.
- 5 YOU CAN PROVIDE EXTRA COVER TO THE LEFT, OR LEAVE THEM TO DIE. WELL, IT'S ONLY A GAME...





him, two others cover the other points in the room, so nobody can take him out from the side. It means that real-world operatives can cover every angle of the room without moving from their positions, and hopefully not lose any limbs in the process.

NO, YOU GO ON POINT

And this is exactly how it goes down in the game. Except you don't just have one option for how to clear a room, because you can never tell whether you're going to be entering an empty chamber or confronted by six screaming murderers. If you think you're about to breach a place filled

with more men than your boys can handle, then you can order your men to chuck a grenade in before entering. Of course, this isn't ideal if you think the men inside are keeping hostages. You'll clear the room only to find that you've just liberated several kilos of ungrateful mince. So when it comes to the rather more subtle business of extracting innocents, the flashbang is your friend. You might have seen it in games before, but here it's used specifically to stun enemies so you can take them down without risking hostages.

If you're confronted with two entrances to cover, don't fret. You can order your team to breach only when >



OVER THE RAINBOW

WE GRILL CHIEF DESIGNER MAXIME BÉLAND ON THE FINER POINTS OF TACTICAL ACTION.



PSW: OK, so what makes the *Rainbow Six* games so different from all the other tactical shooters?

MB: First of all, *Rainbow Six* was the first to bring realism to the first-person shooter with team elements. It's not complicated, everything's context-sensitive. You look at the ground and say 'go go go' and they'll go there. You look at a door and say 'go go go' and they'll open and clear it. It's really easy to play with your team and make them do really cool things.

PSW: So we'll be able to cope with managing a squad, then?

MB: We're not bothering with 'OK guys, now you have to crouch' or having this huge interface. After that, what separates us from other games is the high level of realism that we have in the way they use environments. When they stop, they use cover and peek around corners and use walls to protect themselves.

PSW: Do the characters in your team have separate personalities?

MB: They have some different voice things. The Brit has his own Brit accent and Brit humour. During certain places in the map it'll trigger a certain phrase depending on the context. Another place on the map, the French guy will have a line to say. But kill-wise, they're all the same. They're the best of the best.

PSW: So it's not like one guy will be more cowardly than the others? Say... the Frenchman, for instance?

MB: No, they're all the best of the best of the best. We wanted to add different skills for each character at one point, but there was no point when every character was so good at his job!

PSW: Any features you'd like to see in future *Rainbow Six* games?

MB: Dynamic lighting that affects objects, more interactive music, and for the gameplay, I wish we could do four-player split-screen. Heck, I wish we could do 16-player split-screen! And online – I'd want a thousand online game modes...

PSW: With the number of worldwide terrorist attacks at the moment, don't you get worried that the *Rainbow Six* series is a bit too close to real life?

MB: I don't think so, because everybody knows that Tom Clancy's work is fictional. It's really close to real life, but it's not based on reality and that's something that's really important to us. We don't want to take advantage of events that really happened. After 9/11, we're not touching planes, for example. That's too close. We're staying really ethical about it.

PSW: How did you get the authenticity you needed for all this tactical action?

MB: We employed a larger-than-life ex-police officer who had spent his life planning those kind of operations. He had us doing terrorist-clearing exercises in our office! One time, he had me in a headlock and started squeezing, and wouldn't let go. When I asked him why he didn't let go, he said I should have 'tapped out' by tapping his arm twice. Wish he'd have told me that *before* he started throttling me...





you give the order, after you're waiting at the other door. Say the word – the word here being 'Zulu', for no appreciable reason – and they'll enter just as you fling the other door open, hopefully leaving enemies stymied and disorientated enough to shoot them all in the head.

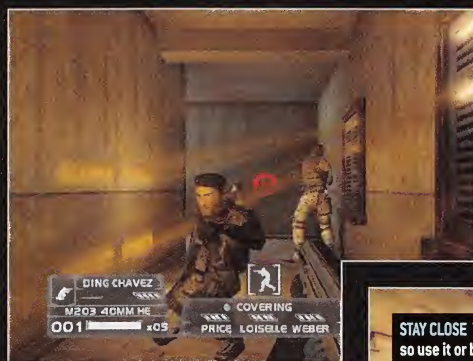
If all this wasn't enough, you can always decide to take the lead yourself and open any door to see what's inside, then kill it. You don't even need to slam the thing open, either. You can use the directional pad to control just how much you open the door, so if you want to push it slightly ajar, take a shot and then close it again, it can all be done with the minimum of fuss. We're slightly surprised that it hasn't cropped up in games before – it's that obvious. And if you don't trust the computer people, then there's a natty split-screen co-operative mode that lets you and a friend form half the team.



SINKING THE RAINBOW WARRIOR

OK, so we might have exaggerated when we were going on about the lack of gadgets available to the Rainbow Six boys. After all, you have access to your classic green screen night goggles, enabling you to see enemies in pitch darkness or half light with a tap of the Triangle button. Another tap will enable funky heat sensing, making you feel like the Predator and highlighting hard-to-spot foes. A select handful of other gadgets drawn from real life will help, but they're only aids to victory, not no-brain shortcuts.

Of course, you won't be able to use them to spot who's a hostage and who's not. And just like in real life, you can't simply touch a hostage and watch them run to safety. You'll have to cuff them before you can consider them saved. This may sound like needless heavy tactics for the poor innocents who have just spent their weekend staring down the



barrel of a gun, but it's cold hard logic. You see, terrorists are well known for being a bit sneaky, and there's simply no way to tell whether the kindly old lady you've just liberated is a harmless civilian or a cold-blooded killing machine. So every single hostage must be secured, or a nasty chuckle and the sound of a bullet entering your backbone might just be the last thing you ever hear.

TACTICAL MAGIC

If all this insistence on intense authenticity is getting you down, you'll be glad to hear that when *Rainbow Six 3* goes internet-wards, everything gets appropriately silly. In fact, online is where the game sheds its stern-faced political hit squad pretensions and frolics naked in the gleaming fields of pure



gameplay pleasure, daisies in its fluffy hair. Nothing changes in terms of skills, weaponry and abilities in the multiplayer game. You're still one heavily armed man in a hostile world. But where there were isolated enemies to take out in a fairly orderly fashion, suddenly your squad has disappeared and you've been infected with the desire to destroy everyone around you. It's as if Jack Ryan finally went insane and started stalking the White House, taking out interns with an AK-47. Well, if those interns were





TAKE A PIC "Come on hostage, smile for the photo! No? Boo."



FIREFIGHT Another area to be secured. Meaning 'ripped up'.

themselves armed with rocket launchers and had nothing better to do than blow each other up in an orgy of meaningless gun death.

By the way, if you're keen on playing as a terrorist, you'd better find another title. We'd recommend the upcoming *SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs* for a start, which is pretty much OK with you playing a desperate 'freedom fighter'. Because thanks to Mr Clancy's rigid rules about what can and can't happen in his games, you won't even be able to take on the mantle of a terrorist in an online multiplayer spat. Apparently, Tom also forbids any of his characters to shoot animals or, strange to say, women. So don't expect to chow down on live adders like Solid Snake, or encounter a whole pack of sexy female terrorists to gun down. It sounds all a bit too straight for the chaotic realm of gaming, but when you consider the extreme realism associated with the immense Clancy brand, it's probably a necessary precaution against endless lawsuits.

In the standard Deathmatch battle, you'll have one chance at being the last to survive while up to 15 other people try to make you dead. This means the

"THE ONLINE MODE FROLICS NAKED IN THE FIELDS OF PURE GAMEPLAY PLEASURE"



DING CHAVEZ

G36C (5.56 MM)

016

ENGAGING

PRICE LOISELLE WEBER

SMOG OF WAR Flash! Bang! What's that? A flashbang.

stakes are high. One shot to the head and you've lost your place as the world's hardest target. You'll also be out of the action for the entire game, condemned to following other players round as a miserable, invisible spectator. Should this type of all or nothing gameplay begin to bore, you can always retreat further into the realms of impossibility and play Sharpshooter mode instead.

You'll be familiar with this style of play from, well, just about every other shooter you've ever experienced. Every time you die, you're miraculously respawned in a random location and the one with the highest score at the end of a preset time is the winner. That sort of gameplay never goes out of style, and we wouldn't be at all surprised if it ended up being the favourite type of *Rainbow Six 3* online match.

Anyway, here's what happens when you play online. Peering cautiously out of your specially selected nook, you survey the urban environment for victims. All seems to be clear, so you venture out into a street and into the damp and rotting confines of an abandoned house. There's movement upstairs, so you chuck a flashbang upwards. After the noise and light has died down, you rush up to find some poor bastard running round like a headless chicken, temporarily blinded and deafened. Pure logic screams "shoot

CLANCY THAT! A COMPLETE MAP OF THE CLANCY-VERSE. INCLUDING BEN AFFLECK.

SPLINTER CELL GAMES

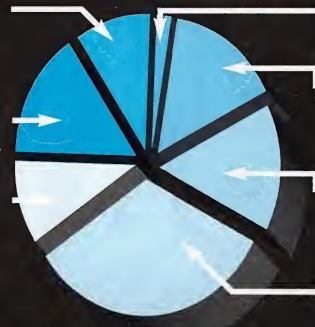
Single-player stealth. Clancy's great hope for the future, with a sequel in the form of *Pandora Tomorrow*.

RAINBOW SIX GAMES

The classic tactical squad-based shooter. Now on PS2.

GHOST RECON GAMES

Small scale military ops, done Clancy-style. The first game on PS2 was something of a wash-out, but *Jungle Storm* tweaks the formula. See page 74 for our exclusive review.



BEN AFFLECK FILMS

The Sum of All Fears. Oh dear oh dear oh dear.

FAKE NOVELS

The Net Force and *Powerplay* novels he didn't write. Avoid 'em.

HARRISON FORD FILMS

Patriot Games etc. Crinkly faces and international politics aplenty.

FAT NOVELS

The books Tom Clancy actually wrote, and the basis for all the rest.

him through the skull", but as you do, you collapse to the ground with a hole in your own head. It's your own fault, because you got too cocky and forgot to check your back. Think of it as expert training for that Bosnian holiday you've always dreamed of.

Meanwhile, we'd advise you to start practising your door-breaching tactics in readiness. But from recent experience we'd have to warn you off of trying them on the ladies' loos in PSW towers. Mind you, talk about your hardened warriors...

FIRST OPINIONS

It's not mindless shooting, it's not pure planning, it's not endless stealth. It's a taut and dangerous mixture of all these things, and it's staking a claim for the grittier end of the action market. We have to say that right now, we're loving the online aspects of the title best, simply because they're so much damn fun. Come with us next issue as we tell you just how well *Rainbow Six 3* performs on and off the internet.

/ JOFF BROWN



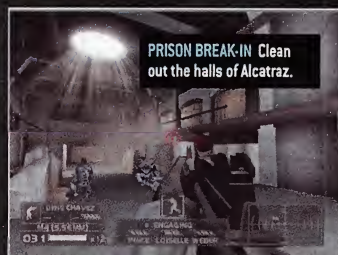
LIGHT WORK Darkened rooms call for goggles.



GUTTER SNIPE Explode barrels for big diversions.



SHOOT TO KILL And aim to avoid huge explosions, too.



PRISON BREAK-IN Clean out the halls of Alcatraz.

SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW

PSW TELLS YOU HOW THE RETURN OF SAM FISHER WILL BRING ABOUT A REVOLUTION IN THE STEALTH GENRE. SOLID SNAKE SHOULD BE WORRIED.

> GENRE ACTION ADVENTURE
> DEVELOPER UBISOFT
> PUBLISHER UBISOFT
> OUT MARCH

OF THE MANY FLINGS AND AFFAIRS WE'VE HAD OVER THE LAST two and a half decades, one broad in particular will always trigger a more forceful avalanche of libidinal memories than the rest:

Splinter Cell. Not only was she beautiful, deep and hugely satisfying, she belonged to another. Ah, the sweet thrill of borrowed love! Cast your mind back and you'll remember that the first time we set eyes upon her she was engaged to be married to Xbox. We could look, but we couldn't touch – the classic lap-dance dynamic. This only served to harden our ardour, fuelling our all-consuming desire for a lady that we loved with the awesome force of a hundred thousand archangels. Eventually we nobbed her in the boot of our brother's Ford Laser, causing the pair to cancel their wedding plans. Within months *Splinter Cell* was our live-in girlfriend.

Alas, we grow weary of her. She has begun to sag in all the wrong places and her conversation bores us to self-abuse. Just not the right kind. Having met her sister this month, the ravishing *Pandora Tomorrow*, we've decided to initiate break-up procedure. So it is that we're leaving *Splinter Cell* cradling our boy-child and weeping the tears of the rejected. Sorry baby, but *PSW* is a love desperado, a trouser-gun for hire. It's been real, but we're moving on to bigger, better and bustier things.

Which is where this feature begins in earnest. The foreplay of the

introductory preamble is over. Time to remove our knickers. Time to get down and dirty...

A large chunk of the appeal of the original *Splinter Cell* was in the story. For J T Petty, the Hollywood screenwriter responsible for crafting *Pandora Tomorrow's* plot, it's vitally important to ensure that once again the game is grounded in solid fact. And for that, he had to undertake a serious amount of research: "There's a two-part thrill to all of Tom Clancy's stuff. Firstly, you pretend that you're Sam Fisher and you go along and spy on people and shoot foreigners. Secondly, there's the thrill that what you're seeing in the game could actually happen; you could be seeing this stuff on CNN in a couple of year's time. I spent a lot of time with the CIA looking at the potential hotspots in the world and built up this mirror-world. If you squint, it looks like our world but isn't. It's the idea of a day-after-tomorrow reality."

Once he'd built up a convincing framework, Petty set about filling it with a story that contained all the classic *Splinter Cell* elements (political wrangling, double-crossing, undercover informants, hi-tech >





THE FISHER KING Might be a good idea to cause a diversion.



MINE YOUR STEP If the pad starts to shake violently, stop and scour for traps.



SNIPE CLEANER Long-range kills are effective, but you'll need to move the body.



gadgetry) but that didn't over complicate the issue. Many players – Petty included – felt that the plot of the original was too elaborate and overly demanding for games players raised on strict diets of kidnapped girlfriends, murdered fathers and villains named after carparts. The crux: they think we're all stoopid because we couldn't summon up the mental strength to grapple with *Splinter Cell's* muscular narrative.

After months chained to his typewriter, Jack Daniels and his Malboro-smoking muse his only company, here's what Petty came up with: Suhadi Sadono, ruthless leader of an Indonesian rebel faction, upsets the CIA, who staple the metaphorical bacon of an assassination order to his groin before unleashing their most ferocious sneaky bulldog, name of Sam Fisher. The end. Brilliantly simple, no? The developer hopes that the cleaner, more direct story will add an urgency to the play that many felt was lacking in part one. It's a hark back to Tom Clancy's earlier work, books like *The Hunt for Red October*, where one simple idea was all it took to drive the action towards the warmth of a satisfying conclusion. If this means that we don't have to concentrate as hard as we did last time – and last time we concentrated so hard we severely sprained our brainstem – then PSW, wheelchair-bound, its face deadened and expressionless, mumbles to itself, wipes its mouth on its hospital-blue plastic bib and gives two thumbs up. We don't remember the question.

This process of stripping the plot down to its underpants and shearing it of the hairs of complexity has enabled J.T. Petty to place extra emphasis on the characters, adding layers of depth and personality that didn't exist previously. Sam Fisher, for example, will be more cynical this time, as well as having the blade of his humour sharpened considerably. Irving Lambert, Third Echelons Coordinator, returns to issue Sam with his orders, while two new characters – Norman Soft, undercover agent, and Douglas Shetland, mercenary leader – are to be used to add flashes of colour to a story that otherwise might dry the palettes of players and leave them dulled and unfulfilled.

THE SILENT TREATMENT

While the style of the story may have changed, most else remains the same. It's still very much a hardcore stealth game, even if the developer has seen fit to inject a number of action set-pieces more in keeping with Snake and *Metal Gear* than Fisher and *Splinter Cell*. And our protagonist still creeps through the game as though all he's really in search of is a porcelain basin large enough to accommodate the brown turtle poking its head from his moaning bottom. And it's still damn hard, although a concerted effort has been made to loosen the tie and undo the top button of a title that many found to be overly businesslike.

Those who remember the alarm system from the original game will



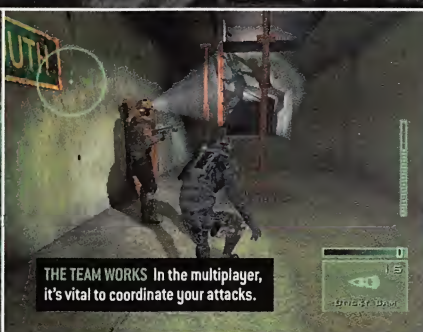
SIGHT LIKE A MAN Laser sights are highly accurate, but also make you more visible.



GAME BIRDS Make too much noise and you'll send birds squawking into the sky.



PAIN IN THE GRASS Avoid moving through foliage where possible.



THE TEAM WORKS In the multiplayer, it's vital to coordinate your attacks.



FRENCH WINDOWS The passenger train level is amazing.

"GO QUIETLY INTO THE NIGHT AND NEVER USE A BULLET WHERE A GLOVED HAND WILL DO"



ADVANTAGE FISHER Always be on the look out for a good vantage point from which to snipe.

know exactly what we're talking about. Here was a set-up so Nazi-like in its outlook you half-expected it to goose-step from your PS2 and jack-boot you in the face while simultaneously *Sieg Heil*-ing. The basic principle was that, for certain levels, you could only afford to raise the alarm three times. Any more and the game ended, no arguments. "Get out Fisher. You're clumsy, you're stupid and you don't deserve to spend any more time with me," spat your machine. Cue bad moods, broken pads, ruined evenings, soured relationships and brows so heavily furrowed they completely covered the middle portion of the face.

Having conducted a sizeable amount of research into how *Splinter Cell* was received, it's little surprise that the guts of the old alarm system have been torn out, stir-fried and fired into space for all eternity never to be seen again. Amen to that. In its place comes a fairer, less rigid way of punishing you for any lapses in concentration. Rather than strike you out for every mistake, baseball-style, *Pandora Tomorrow* will instead trigger a shift in the intelligence of the guards on patrol, meaning the levels will be harder if you make too much noise, but still not impossible. Hence: get spotted once and the sentries will, as a group, become more aggressive in their bid to search you out. Dark corners will be checked more thoroughly and patrol routes will become harder to predict. Get spotted twice, leave a second footprint in the dirt

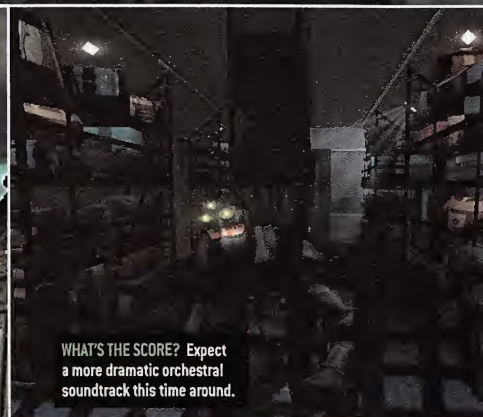
or a second lifeless body in the open and the guards will be instructed to pull on full body armour. Get spotted a third and final time and you're in serious trouble. Suffice to say, it might be a good idea right about now to strap the golden wristwatch you intend to hand down to your only son around the neck of that brown turtle we discussed earlier. Because phase three has the guards pulling on Kevlar helmets to match those bullet-proof cardigans. The game won't be over as it would've been in the first game, but it will be significantly harder for you to complete your mission. And that's the last thing you need. Because trust us, *Pandora Tomorrow* is hard enough as it is. So go quietly into the night, don't giggle to yourself and never – repeat never – use a bullet where a gloved hand around the throat will do.

As we mentioned previously, *Pandora Tomorrow* is a little less po-faced than its parent title. For an example of where this carefree spirit will lead you, look no further than the only fully completed level thus far: the infiltration of the French passenger train. The mission begins with Fisher crouched atop the 23:34 to Marseilles. The moment you find a way into the train you find yourself at a fork in the road. You need to reach the front carriage, but how? Do you go through the middle of the train? You could, but it's crawling with guards and passengers and you can't run the risk of the whole thing degenerating into a shootout. What if you went under the train, hanging from the axles

"THE KIND OF MOMENT YOU'LL BE TELLING STRANGERS ABOUT FOR DAYS AND DAYS AFTER."



THAT PATROL EMOTION As before, you'll spend hours observing guard patterns.



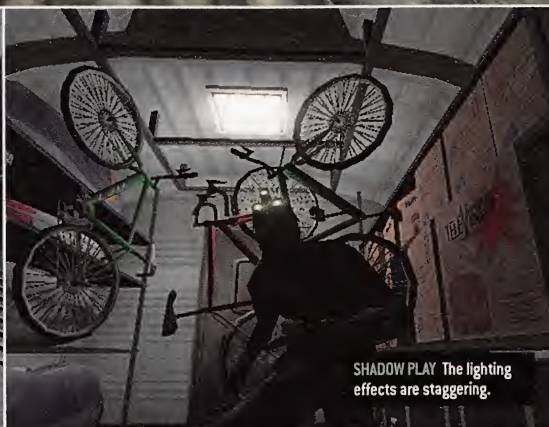
WHAT'S THE SCORE? Expect a more dramatic orchestral soundtrack this time around.



PLAY IT AGAIN SAM The levels have enormous replay value.



A BRIDGE TOO LOW Stay low and keep an eye out for bridges.



SHADOW PLAY The lighting effects are staggering.



and painstakingly pulling yourself to the front of the try? It's an option, but the word 'painstaking' suggests it might be physically quite exhausting. Maybe you could go back onto the roof the train and creep forward that way? Possibly, but that way you're running a very real risk of being swatted into a ditch by a low bridge, the kind they always have when spies are standing on the tops of trains. You're pretty much screwed then. Give up. Phone Lambert and tell him that you're a whoopsy and that you won't be working for the CIA again. Unless... no forget it. You wouldn't be tough enough for that. Go home to your mother... Oh, OK then: what if you could find a way to dangle from the outside of the train? That would be cool.

SWINGING FROM THE TRAIN, WE'RE SWINGING FROM THE TRAIN...

Three factors to take into account when you're dangling from the outside of the train: 1) Should the guards catch a glimpse of you through the window, they'll start reducing the passengers to puddles. Which means you can only move when the sentries aren't looking. 2) Swing over a window at the same time as the train passes a streetlight and a huge shadow will be cast over the interior of the carriage, thereby giving you away instantly. Which means you need to develop a steady sense of rhythm and to synchronise your inner-metronome to the steady beat of

the 200 watt lamps. 3) Passengers on the train are likely to be somewhat surprised should they catch a glimpse of you hanging from the roof of the train, no matter how pure your intentions. Which means you need to keep one eye on the sentries, a second eye on the streetlamps and a third – and not your brownest one – on the faces of the passengers. Like the passenger doing her make-up in her reflection. Wait for her to rummage in her bag for her powder, then go, go, go.

It's a brilliant passage of play, the kind of unforgettable gaming moment you'll be telling people about for days after. Not only does it look incredible – from the lighting effects inside to the oncoming trains outside – it brings something genuinely original to a genre that has threatened to stagnate over recent months. By combining traditional stealth values with the core principle of a rhythm action game, *Pandora Tomorrow* has managed to completely refurbish our council-owned, gin-soaked, yellow-ceilinged enthusiasm for the classic sneak 'em up title.

Another minor innovation is the increased use of the vibrating joypad to warn you of imminent danger. For example, creeping through the jungles of Indonesia, your controller begins shaking like turbo-charged vibrator. The further you move forward, the more intense the shocks become. Your sex-starved mother would be loving this. Taking the hint, you stop and survey the scene. Seconds later you discover a trip-wire hidden in the long grass. Had you ignored the chattering of your

TOMORROW'S WORLD

PANDORA TOMORROW IN THEIR OWN WORDS. THE DEVELOPERS SPEAK.

"We wanted to challenge the unwritten rules of the first game. We didn't just want to thrust Sam into another industrial or urban environment so we dropped him in an open, outdoor environment outside an Indonesian camp that he must infiltrate before sunrise."

— Producer Julian Gerighty explains the thinking behind the setting

"I want the Sam Fisher video games to be like Jack Ryan books. Instead of creating sequel after sequel, I want the games to be more like season after season; one continuing history within a coherent universe."

— Scriptwriter J T Petty on his intentions for the future of Splinter Cell

"We're not about going to fight giant robots. We're about things that could happen in the real world."

— The Splinter Cell ethos explained

"There are a lot of different ways to play the game, but it's still a stealth action game so we want to encourage the player to be discreet."

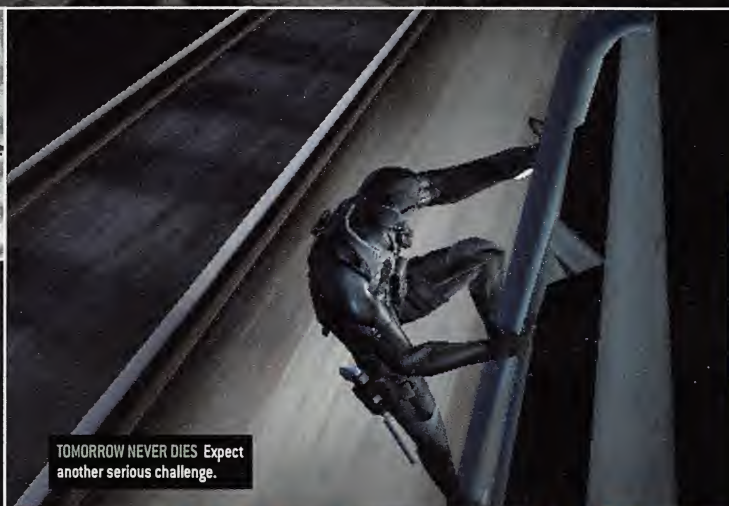
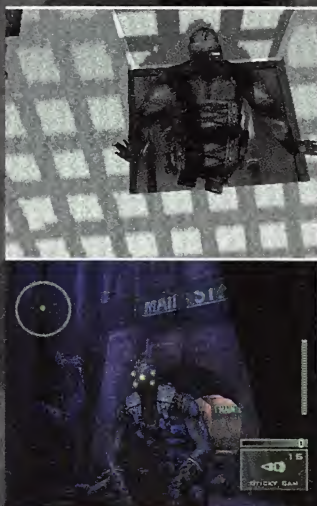
— Pandora Tomorrow's Julian Gerighty on keeping it real

"A lot of people thought that the first game was too linear. We think there's a certain amount of linearity that's necessary for a stealth-based game."

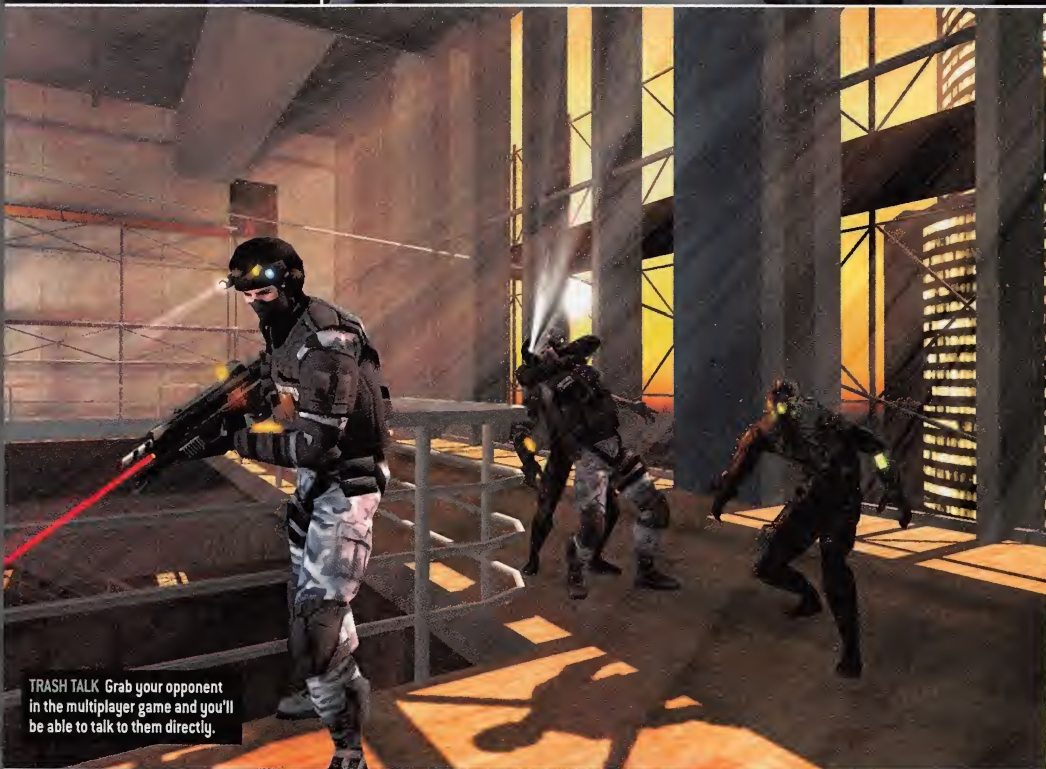
— Don't expect a complete free reign.

"For the multiplayer game we wanted to create a virtual couch environment. We're encouraging Pandora Tomorrow players to be creative with their abuse, to use it in a clever way to rile their rivals."

— Go ahead, take the piss out of the French players. It's what they would've wanted.



TOMORROW NEVER DIES Expect another serious challenge.



TRASH TALK Grab your opponent in the multiplayer game and you'll be able to talk to them directly.

GET MOVING

HOW TO MOVE LIKE SAM FISHER.



1> THE WALL JUMP

HOW TO> Jump between two parallel walls, launching yourself from one to the other while steadily climbing higher and higher.

WHY DO IT?> Because it allows you to reach platforms that would be otherwise out of reach.

AS SEEN IN> Super Mario Sunshine on the Nintendo [spit] GameCube

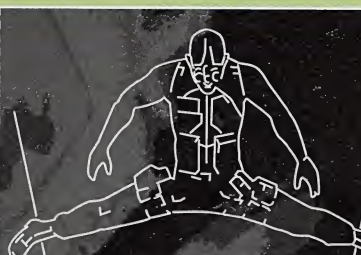


2> THE STANDING ROLL

HOW TO> Stand next to an open door with your back against the wall. Then move from one side to the other, rotating through 360 degrees as you go.

WHY DO IT?> Because it enables you to see what's inside a given room before you enter.

AS SEEN IN> Ballroom dancing, the new SWAT movie



3> THE SPLITS

HOW TO> Find a gap measuring about six-foot wide and spread your legs out until you're splayed open like a happy Labrador.

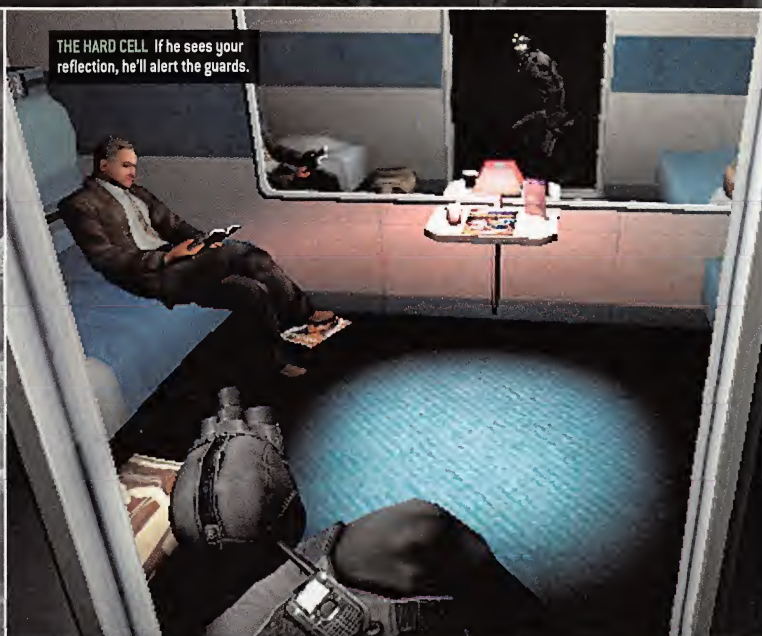
WHY DO IT?> Because it allows you to drop directly on top of your enemy.

AS SEEN IN> Fame, Kids from Fame Jean-Claude Van Damme films

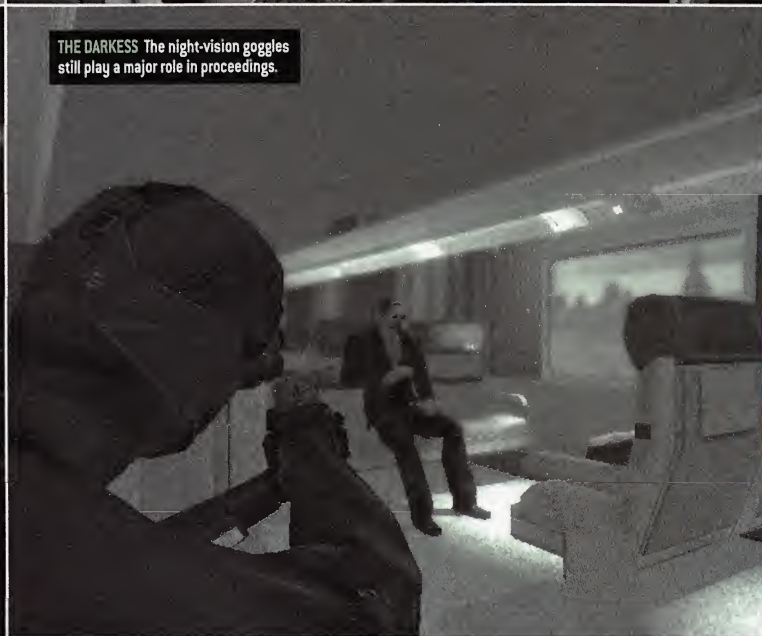




ON THE MOVE Fisher is far more versatile this time around.



THE HARD CELL If he sees your reflection, he'll alert the guards.



THE DARKESS The night-vision goggles still play a major role in proceedings.

communicative pad you would've been paste. All of which means you'll need to concentrate on more than just visual clues this time around. In fact, the only two senses that won't be called upon for *Pandora Tomorrow* are taste and smell. Unless you can smell fear. In which case it's time you showered and put on a fresh pair of pants.

You'll be wanting to know about the gadgets then. After all, Fisher's utility belt was one of the only compelling reasons to play *Splinter Cell* over *Metal Gear Solid 2*. Lead producer Julian Gerighty is fully aware of this, so much so that for *Pandora Tomorrow* he has instructed the development team to create levels to suit the gadgets, rather than the other way around: "We re-designed the maps according to what we want the player to experience. We wanted to give players new gadgets and we also wanted to revisit old ones. For example, the optic camera now has night vision and thermal vision. It can also be used to see what's above you and what's below you. This has implications for level design, because it means we're thinking vertically and not just horizontally."

ONLINE OF FIRE

Son of *Splinter Cell* intends to bring the sneak 'em up game online in a workable fashion for the first time in the history of video games. There's an obvious snag here: games such as this have been designed explicitly

to be played alone. A significant wad of the enjoyment is derived directly from the fact that it's you and only you against an entire compound of guards. So how do you retain the atmosphere and excitement of the one-man experience while sharing it with a friend? (Insert *Carry On*-style guffaw here.) Here's how: You see that guard standing over there on the corner? For the purpose of the multiplayer game, he's not being controlled by your PlayStation2 but by a fellow human. Go ahead, sneak up on him and pull off his balaclava for a Scooby Doo-style reveal. Understand? One team plays the spies, the other the guards.

We stick to the shadows, you poke around with your torch beam in the hope of yanking away our veil of darkness. Then we poke around with the torch beams while you attempt to creep up on us and silently break our neck. Genius. The player ceiling is capped tightly at four, but it's entirely up to you how many you have on each side. Before you decide which one you're on, it's worth bearing in mind that playing as a spy is entirely different from playing as a guard. For one, the equipment is different. Spies have night-vision goggles, while guards have movement detectors specifically designed to track slow-moving objects. For two, the objectives are different. One team defends, laying traps and identifying key entry and exit points to be protected, while the other attacks, attempting to sneak in through the back door the moment the latch is left down. And for three, the perspectives are different. Spies play from



“THE POTENTIAL FOR ABUSING OPPONENTS IS ALMOST INFINITE”



the third person [that being the standard view] while guards play from the first person. This forces guards to rely more on their powers of observation. Where spies will be able to freely rotate their game camera, sentries will have a far more limited field of vision, cranking up the tension and levelling out the playing field.

Pandora Tomorrow supports the PS2 headset, meaning you'll be able to talk to your teammates to plan attacks or to set patrol routes. By using either your binoculars or your sniper rifle it'll be possible to eavesdrop on your opponents. Brilliantly, should a spy manage to creep up on a guard and get a good grip around his throat he'll be able to whisper in his ear for the duration of the headlock without fear of reply. The potential for abuse here is almost infinite. Almost, but not quite. After all, there's only so many different ways of saying, "You suck, I rule."

And so we have yet another reason to embrace the coming of a new gaming year with our arms outstretched and our trousers around our ankles. Not only will *Pandora Tomorrow* scrape away many of the carbuncles that have formed on the bottom of the original *Splinter Cell*, it'll also assist *SOCOM 2* and [hopefully] *Resident Evil Outbreak* in their joint bid to spare the life of the Broadband Adapter. You're staring the future right in the eye. And the good news is, it's only a tomorrow away.

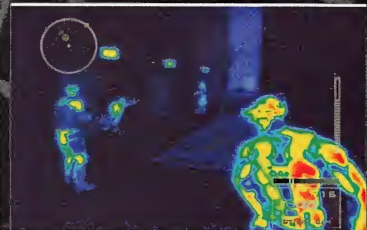
/ JON BROWN



RIGHT GUARD



KEITH SADDLES, ROYAL BEEFEATER, ON HOW TO GUARD YOUR TERRITORY IN *PANDORA TOMORROW*.



1/ If you think you can see something in the shadows, switch to your thermo goggles. I've lost count of the number of flashes I've caught under Sophie Monk's windows with these.



2/ If they fail, dig out the movement sensor, which highlights anything that's moving. Perfect for rumbling prowling foreigners hoping to catch a glimpse of Kim Beazley's balls.



3/ Keep an eye out for laser sights. When robots came back from the future to kill Rose Byrne, it only was the small red dots swarming over her that alerted me to the danger.



4/ Your torch is your best friend. Burglars hate the light. So does Bernard Fanning. That's a coincidence. The torch beam makes you less inconspicuous, but it'll make their job harder.



5/ Identify a key corridor or room and fill it with proximity mines. I'll never forget the time I rigged John Howard's pagoda with explosives, only for a hapless Japanese tourist to set it off.



> **MANIAC COP**

The scariest thing about the undead is that they still diligently go about their jobs.

“THE FEAR OF WHAT MIGHT BE AROUND THE CORNER IS OFTEN SCARIER.”

FORBIDDEN SIREN

AS IF *SILENT HILL 3* WASN'T GRUESOME ENOUGH, HERE'S ANOTHER SURVIVAL HORROR ZOMBIE RAMPAGE TO TICKLE YOUR SPHINCTER.

| | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| > GENRE | SURVIVAL HORROR |
| > DEVELOPER | SONY |
| > PUBLISHER | SONY |
| > OUT | MARCH |
| > ONLINE | NO |

WHAT IS IT ABOUT THE JAPANESE THAT MAKES

them the current masters of horror? *Audition*, *The Eye*, *Dark Water* and *Ring* are absolutely terrifying films, more so because they draw on Asian folklore and culture – which for ignorant Western audiences can be just as unsettling as watching a woman crawl out of a TV.

Forbidden Siren is similarly frightening. It's a game that benefits hugely from not being anglicised too much; the Japanese characters, use of subtitles and half-explained incidents are the basis for its alien atmosphere. Not having a clue what's going on is part of the appeal. In recent years, survival horror games have moved on from simple zombie shootouts to being the absurd handiwork of a mentalist, the kind of bloke who can play *Silent Hill 3* and watch a David Lynch movie at the same time and then explain the meaning of both. Now that's scary.

It starts by introducing us to the Japanese mountain village of Hanyuda where a unique religious ritual is performed for the first time in 27 years. Bad move. Following the ritual, a siren sounds, an earthquake occurs and a sea of blood lures in the residents – from which they emerge as zombies. Only ten villagers remain unaffected and it's this ragtag of survivors you alternately control over the course of 78 chapters spanning three days.

Each chapter is titled by character name, location and time, which means sod all until the game tries its best to confuse you by mixing up the chronology. Some events are told from different perspectives and occasionally your actions help other playable characters, even though you might not know it at the time. For example, closing floodgates in one scenario allows the blood red river to be crossed in a later one, while more intentional aid comes from taking up a good sniping position. After a certain point these chapters are available to play in any order.

The first chapter is essentially a training level and follows the progress of a student called Kyoya Suda, who regains consciousness by the river, bleeding from a gaping chest wound. A typical student night out then. A mysterious nun soon shows up babbling about how it isn't safe to stay in one place for long, so you follow her into the village where she teaches you the art of 'sightjacking'.

SECOND SIGHT

Sightjacking is the fancy name for tuning in to another character's brain and seeing everything through their eyes. Pressing L2 switches the screen to a kind of fuzzy TV static and moving the left analogue stick tunes in to a maximum of four characters' perspectives. Integral as it is to *Forbidden Siren*, sightjacking is really just a stylish security camera through which you can see an enemy's location and patrol pattern but, since the game is more about stealth than direct combat, this doesn't matter. You can also use it to see numbers of a code being tapped into a security lock or someone's phone number being dialled.

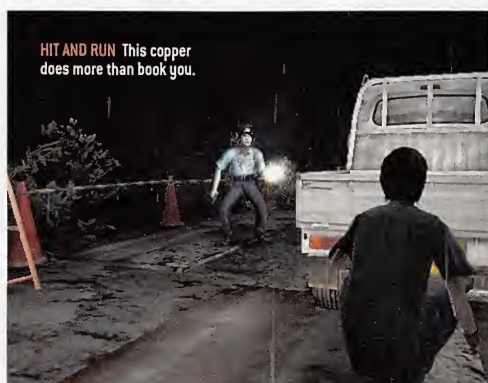
The next level plays like a homage to the *Silent Hill* series. Set in a blacked-out school under siege by the undead (presumably history teachers) you play Reiko Takato, a female teacher trying to escape with a young pupil in tow. Pressing Triangle brings up a list of basic >>



CRACKDOWN It only takes a couple of hits.



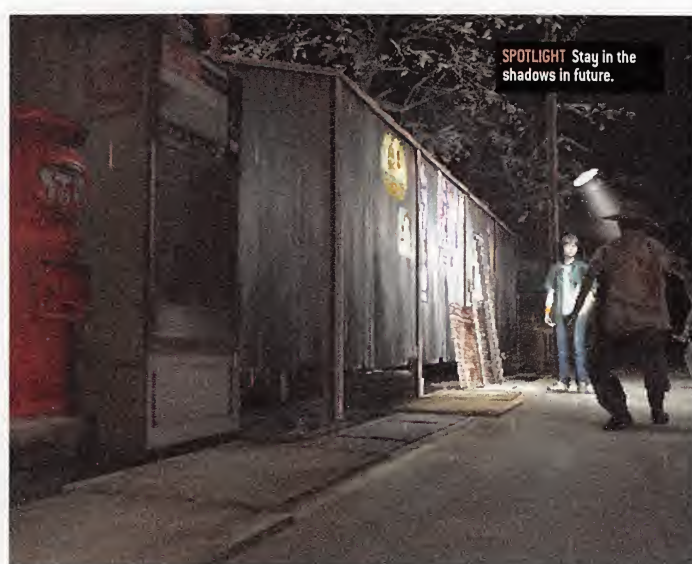
SHUT EYE What you look like when sightjacking.



HIT AND RUN This copper does more than book you.



KEY MASTER Zombies are attracted to torch beams.



SPOTLIGHT Stay in the shadows in future.

FIRE UP THE RANDOM PLOT GENERATOR!

ARCHAIC PLOT MACHINE CHURNS OUT ANOTHER FAMILIAR STORY.

In...

- a) A fog-shrouded town ☐
- b) A fog-shrouded village ☐
- c) A secret underground military/research facility ☐

the inhabitants have...

- a) Turned into zombies ☐
- b) Disappeared altogether ☐
- c) Been eaten by dinosaurs ☐

It's now up to you as a...

- a) Tough special forces recruit ☐
- b) Put-upon office clerk ☐
- c) Paranormal investigator ☐

to explore areas such as the....

- a) Abandoned school ☐
- b) Abandoned hospital ☐
- c) Abandoned mansion ☐

and...

- a) Find out what's happened ☐
- b) Find out what's happened and exorcise your personal demons ☐
- c) Find out what's happened, exorcise your personal demons and be reunited with a relative ☐



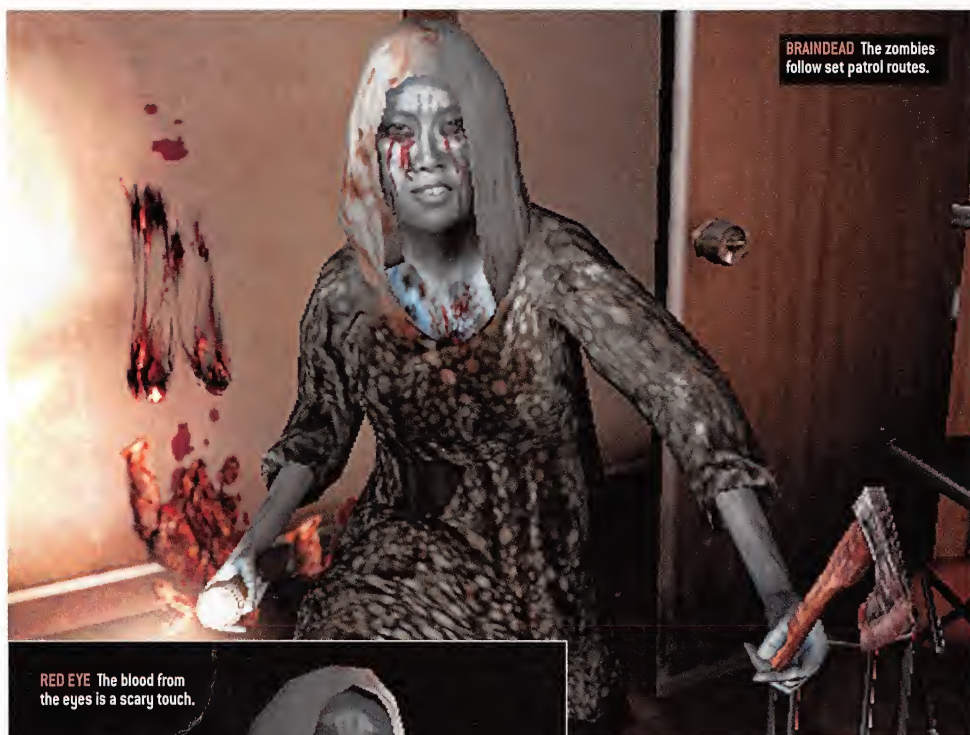
FORBIDDEN SIREN **FACT!**

>SILENCE IS GOLDEN
Director Keiichiro Toyama directed *Silent Hill* while at Konami. And it shows.

>HOMEGROWN
The developer wanted to draw on strange Japanese culture and indigenous customs. Fascinating...

>FORTUNE-TELLER
A timetable menu option links the 78 chapters so things don't get too confusing.

>AGAINST ALL ODDS
A recurring theme is that you're nearly always weaker than the zombies.



movement commands to give the brat, as well as context-sensitive actions for Takato, such as locking a door. Sightjacking is essential as it's virtually impossible to survive if you or the girl are spotted. The zombies are unusual in that they're swift and intelligent, using torches to sweep the hallways and classrooms on their set patrol patterns. They're also attracted to Takato's own torch beam, which means you spend most of this level creeping around in the dark and biding your time until the coast is clear to dash from one room to the next. There's nothing more chilling than hiding in a classroom behind a desk and watching from the zombie's perspective as it enters waving a flashlight.

FOG OF WAR

Another chapter is set in the town's mine and introduces a new character, Akira Shimura, a grizzled 70-year-old hunter who's packing a rifle but only has 12 bullets. Fortunately holding R1 zooms in on targets making it harder to miss and it only takes one hit to drop an undead miner anyway. This is also the first time that objectives can be completed in more than one way, probably because you at least have means to defend yourself. The easiest method is to find a pair of wirecutters and use them to cut free a minecart, which then careers along the tracks and mows down a sniper guarding the exit gate. Yes, there really is a zombie sniper. Or you can escape the direct way by taking out the creature yourself, sightjacking to see when it reloads and using the momentary distraction to pop out from cover and shoot.

As with all survival horror games, the graphics and sound are hugely important in delivering the requisite number of gross-out moments and shocks. For the most part, *Forbidden Siren* doesn't disappoint. While only a handful of scenes make you jump or recoil in disgust, the fear of what might be around the corner is often scarier than coming face to face with something. Just walking down a long corridor proves an unnerving experience when the distorted, echoic sound is blended with your character's footsteps and heavy breathing. Outdoor levels are a bit disappointing so far though, constantly shrouded in heavy rain and fog, which adds atmosphere but tends to cover up the impressive detail. The developer has opted for almost photo-realistic faces, superb wear and tear effects in the rundown interiors, and a realistic grainy look that fits in well with the TV reception-style sightjacking.

The game isn't flawless mind. For starters there's no margin for error, with zombies a crack shot and each playable character only able to survive a couple of hits. If you're spotted you might as well just give up and restart, especially when you're lumbered with a weaker companion unable to defend themselves properly. Characters also have an annoying habit of trying to push scenery *Tomb Raider*-style if you accidentally brush against it at speed, wasting valuable seconds which can mean the difference between dodging a bullet and being shot. Hopefully these niggles will be ironed out and, if the enthusiastic Japanese reviews are anything to go by, then *Forbidden Siren* could prove serious competition for *Silent Hill 3*.

FIRST OPINIONS

Almost as terrifying and grotesquely beautiful as *Silent Hill 3*. What it lacks in genuine shocks, it makes up for with better combat and a stylish and original take on familiar stealth gameplay.

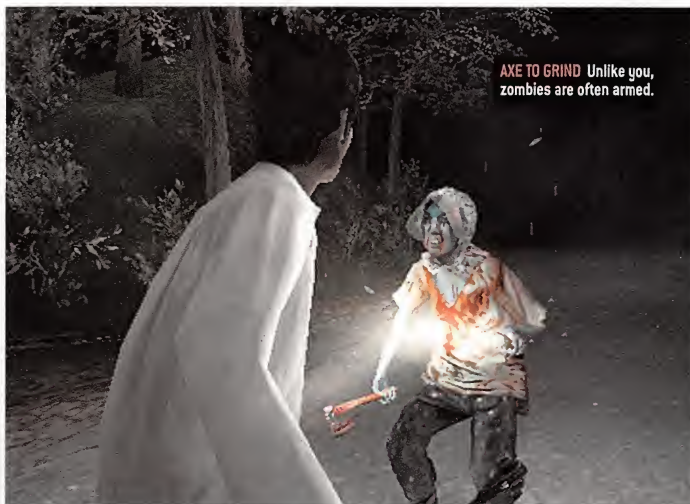
/ JONATHAN TODD

WHAT THE MAKERS SAY

"BRACE YOURSELF FOR A CLAUSTROPHOBIC EXPERIENCE IN A WORLD OF TENSION AND DESPAIR WHERE SURVIVAL WILL ONLY BE ATTAINED BY THOSE WITH PATIENCE, INTELLIGENCE AND NERVES OF STEEL."



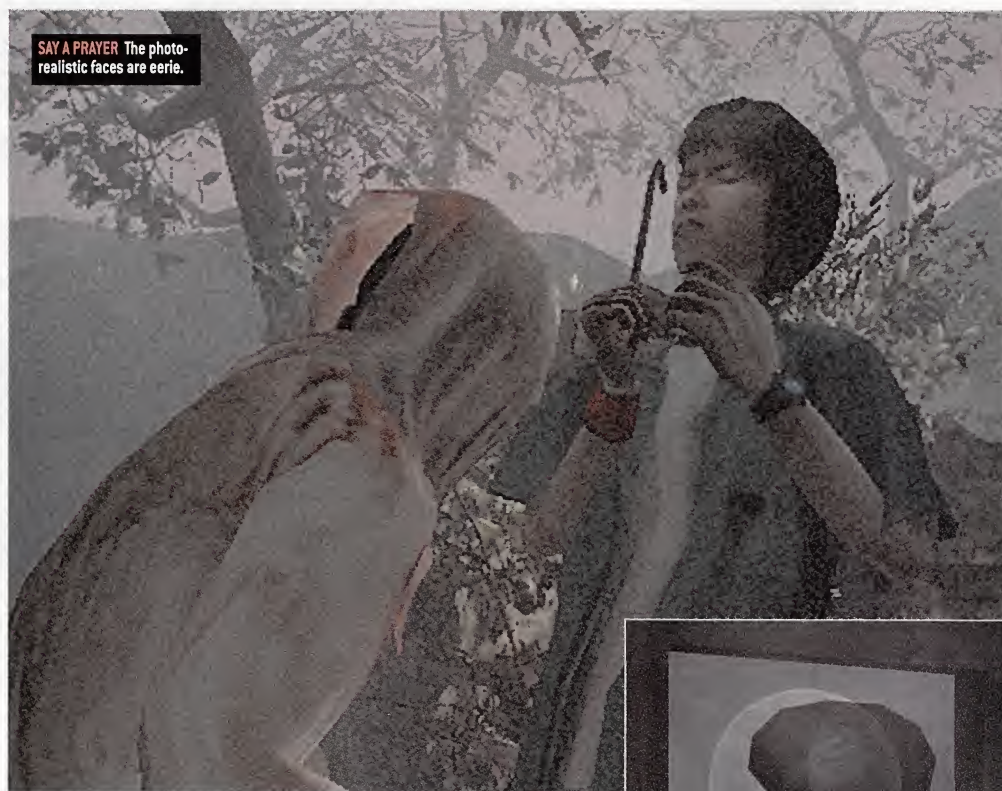
HIM AGAIN The red sea has healing powers.



AXE TO GRIND Unlike you, zombies are often armed.



“SIGHTJACKING IS A STYLISH SECURITY CAMERA FOR WATCHING AN ENEMY’S PATROL PATTERN.”



SAY A PRAYER The photo-realistic faces are eerie.

TURN ON, TUNE IN, DROP OUT

HOW THE TV-STYLE SIGHTJACKING FEATURE WORKS IN *FORBIDDEN SIREN*.



8.30 STAY TUNED (1992)

FILM Find a safe area (your character becomes immobile during sightjacking) and press L2 to turn the picture to static.

10.45 POINTS OF VIEW

Move the left analogue stick to 'tune in' to other characters, allowing you to see the world through their eyes.

11.20 PANORAMA

Study each enemy's patrol pattern from their perspective to figure out how to get past undetected and – more importantly – unharmed.

11.50 SURVIVAL SPECIAL

Using sightjacking you saw the zombie begin searching elsewhere, so sneak by while its not looking.



DOWN THE BARREL Snipers never miss, so there's usually an easier way to get past them.



HATS OFF Undead old-timers inhabit the spooky mine level.



CHIN UP Every gun lets you zoom in, not just the sniper rifle.



GRAN TURISMO 4 VS **R: RACING**



GRAN TURISMO 4

Pull on your seatbelt and prepare to feel the **devastating impact** as two titans of
Only one game can walk away. So which will it be: *R: Racing*, the
or *Gran Turismo 4*, a game so large that **God has started**



// WORDS: JON BROWN //



VS *R: RACING*

the motorsport genre **collide head on.**

brainy bastard offspring of arcade classic *Ridge Racer*,

wearing heels? We're only waiting for the green light... **Go! Go! Go!**



GRAN TURISMO 4



A TREMBLING PLAYSTATION2 IS STANDING ON THE cliff top of its capabilities, tentatively peering over the edge while gulping hard and wondering to itself quite how it managed to get this high. Deep down it knows that video games were never supposed to look this good. It's confusing. Unsettling. Disturbing. Gamers look at *Gran Turismo 4*, sparkling, winking, gently kissing them on the back of their neck with a tenderness that they never thought a driving game was capable of – then they look outside, the gurning face of real life gobbing a phlegmy message in their general direction that reads 'Fact may be stranger than fiction, but fiction is so much prettier.'

Had God known that PlayStation2 was this magnificently powerful a few million years back, he would've used one to create the world. People could've been better looking. Roads could've been attractive, enough to make you positively enjoy the ten-mile hearse ride to your parents' funeral. And grime-speckled shit piles like downtown New York could've been

colourful, clean and appealing. Listen closely and you can hear the coffee percolator sound of our minds gently boggling as we think of what a processor capable of rendering 66 million polygons per second could've done with an unripened urban boil like Hornsby.

Our only concern is that *GT4* will spoil us for normal games. Like a businessman who regularly participates in vulgar acts of group sex at his company's expense (being sure to ask for receipts so he can claim them on tax), only to find that he can no longer enjoy straight intercourse with his pretty, flabby wife, we've seen things so extraordinary, so fascinatingly explicit this month that our frame of reference has splintered beyond repair. In short, how are we ever supposed to go back to the likes of *Need for Speed Underground* after this?

Face it – we can't. Not that we'd ever need to. Because like a really massive, really pretty female, the length, breadth and depth of *GT4* are in direct proportion to its good looks. It's a game so hideously massive it's capable of scooping up great fistfuls of your time and swallowing

GRAN MASTER#1



FORD GT CONCEPT

Top speed:

315km/h

0-60:

3.7 seconds

Horsepower:

400bhp

If any car is worthy of sharing the road with McLaren's F1 car it's this bastardised version of the classic GT40. Expect to play top dollar for one of these, and to crash it time and again before you fully get to grips with it.



THE BIGGEST PLAYSTATION2 GAME EVER JOYRIDDEN ALL THE WAY TO THE SCRAPYARD GATES. WE'VE PLAYED *GRAN TURISMO 4* TO DEATH. READ ON FOR THE FULL AUTOPSY...



| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| ● TYPE: | DRIVING |
| ● PUBLISHER: | SONY |
| ● DEVELOPER: | POLYPHONY |
| ● ETA: | MARCH |
| ● ONLINE: | YES |

them whole as though they were little more than lightly dampened Coco Pops. Very few developers could ever hope to engineer the gameplay to match graphics as breath-swiping as these. Thankfully, Polyphony is one of the chosen few. May the Lord make us truly thankful.

REINVENTING THE WHEELS

That's enough of that, let's get back to how it looks, paying special attention to the cars. No matter how gorgeous *GT4*'s circuits are – and they're so gorgeous they're going to make blind people weep – it's the hundreds and hundreds of cars that will mug you time and time again of every last ounce of astonishment in your wonderment pocket. Once you've selected your car, it twirls in front of you in an alluring manner that recalls both an elephant's leg of browning kebab meat impaled on a Lebanese man's spike, and a smiling female fresh from the changing room in a new outfit that she desperately wants you to approve of. In the case of all three – the car, the

meat, the broad – the temptation to lunge forward and lick is overwhelming.

Just like life, just like girls, you can't lick them all. As lovely as it would be, there's simply way too many of them. *GT3* had just over 180 cars. *GT4* has over 500. That's twice as many, then half again and then a quarter again. And then five more. You will never drive all the cars in this game. It won't happen, not in your lifetime. The first couple of hundred, maybe. Bonus cars are thrown at you at an astonishing rate from the opening licence test onwards, *GT4* being far more generous when it comes to handing out the extra vehicles than the previous games. But collecting them all, completing the game 100% is a daunting, yawningly goliath task that you'll more than likely crumble in the face of. So long as you get the chance to experience the terror of being strapped into the McLaren F1 car before being fired off to bounce around the Grand Canyon, however, you won't mind. This four-wheeled rocket, which, for reasons that escape us, has been plastered with advertising that will never be >

GRAN MASTER#2



TOYOTA CELICA GT-4

Top speed: 300km/h

0-60: 4.0 seconds

Horsepower: 300bhp

A monstrously fast road-eater that invites you to sit in its belly and refuses to let you out until your face is stretched and your stomach is in the mood for an argument. One of the most powerful rally cars in the entire GT universe.



// THE GRAND CANYON COURSE POSITIVELY BREATHES, HUMAN FIGURES SWARMING AROUND YOUR FILTHY CAR TO GET A BETTER LOOK AS YOU THUNDER ON PAST. //

anything more than a passing blur to the spectators, is comfortably the pick of GT4's current roster of cars. Its speed is freakish yet you always feel in complete control. That's a testament both to McLaren as manufacturers and Polyphony as developers.

The pick of the in-game camera angles, seemingly positioned from within a chasing helicopter, shows you your McLaren F1 car in its full glory, a stream of reflections washing over its pleasantly buffered chassis. It's much easier to play from the bumper camera, naturally, but if you want the hit of the whole fruit – and sweet baby Jesus this fruit hits harder than a frozen vegetable – you'll be wanting to play from this perspective, the one that gives you the widest field of view of the marvellous scenery.

The game environments stretch out further than they need to. At times you'll lose yourself in the horizon, admiring the faraway canyons in the Nevada desert while your sulking, neglected motor piles into the crash barrier and jars to a sudden halt. The most significant

difference between *Gran Turismo 3* and *Gran Turismo 4* (the more time we spend with part four the more we become convinced that the previous game was in fact nothing more than a warm-up lap for the full-on race to come) is that the latest instalment is thick with life. People are everywhere – in the cars (the convertible ones at least), in the pits, by the side of the road, in the middle of the road – wherever you care to look. The Grand Canyon course positively breathes, human figures swarming around your filthy car to get a closer look as you thunder on past. Flash bulbs explode, cheers reverberate and photographers limp out of the way in the manner of old people with sunburnt feet as you attempt in vain to send them spinning over your roof. It's amazing how much difference this seemingly minor graphical flourish makes to the atmosphere of the races. Suddenly you're not alone anymore. Suddenly the clinical, artificial game environment of *GT3* has been replaced with a thriving, buzzing world filled with movement and excitable humans.

GRAN MASTER#3



MITSUBISHI LANCER MR EVOLUTION
255km/h
5.1 seconds
271bhp

Top speed:
0-60:
Horsepower:
A high-speed tank with a heavyweight engine to match its immaculately sturdy chassis, the latest build of the Lancer Evolution series is the closest many high-street drivers will ever get to owning (or stealing) a race car.



Subaru Impreza (JGTC#77) '03

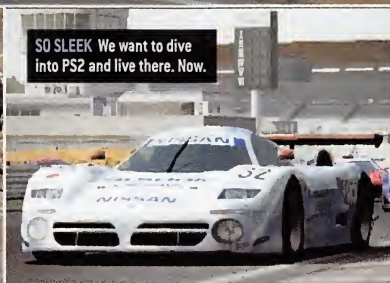
DRIVE It looks breathtaking. Dow look. More cars.



JUST DESERTS See the Grand Canyon and rejoice.



SO SLEEK We want to dive into PS2 and live there. Now.



...AHM There's the usual selection of 'mum cars' too.



YEAH BABY Smell my burning rubber you trogs!



GRAN MASTER#4



SUBARU LEGACY GT

Top speed:

0-60:

Horsepower:

210km/h

6.1 seconds

250bhp

Do you lack ambition? Are you excited by incredibly mundane things? Is walking sometimes too fast for you? Then save up your pennies and roll them in the direction of Subaru, who'll send you this low speed wife-pleaser.

The increased intelligence of the drivers you share a starting grid with only confirms the fact that you're no longer residing in an emotion vacuum. From the very first bend onwards you can sense the giant leap forward made by your rival drivers. Where before they struggled to get a handle on such simple concepts as overtaking and cutting you up, now they're completely fluent in the language of modern race driving, closing you down on tight bends, riding in your slipstream and overtaking you on the inside to leave you contemplating the rather unnerving realisation that your PS2 might finally be cleverer than you are.

THE RACE IN THE PACK

All of which comes as a blessed relief. Thus far, the *Gran Turismo* series has prided itself on its ability to provide 'Real Driving' simulations, a boast that sounds impressive until you realise the sizeable difference between a great driving game and a great racing game. Need it spelling out? OK. A great driving game needs

only solid physics, solid graphics and solid courses. A great racing game needs solid physics, solid graphics, solid courses *and* a solid spread of rival drivers to offer you a serious challenge over the long term. It's a quadruplet of qualities that only *TOCA Race Driver* has managed to bind together in recent years. Or at least that was the case until 2004 rolled into view, bringing with it the only game in living memory that you actually *need* to own.

The bottom line is, if you're looking to make any headway in the vast alternate universe of *GT4*, a land of beautifully shiny tarmac engraved with endless trails of unfalteringly trustworthy racing lines, you'll need to get out of the bad habits you've picked up over the course of three *GT* games so far, and sharpish. There's no space for sloppiness here, particularly since *Gran Turismo* grand wizard Kazunori Yamauchi took the decision to come down hard on those cheating drivers (like us), who plough their way round corners without braking and think nothing of hurtling into crash

barriers, which to them resemble giant cushions. Fail to slow for a corner, connect with the roadside scenery with any significant force, and the game will impose a speed limit on you for a ten-second period. Though not exactly crippling – you'll be faster than an electric scooter going downhill with a tailwind yet slower than a broken finch being fired from a catapult in the vague direction of its empty nest by a guilty, somewhat heavy-handed child – it nevertheless forces you to



think twice about how you overtake in the heat of competition.

The licence tests also strongly encourage you to race very much within the rules, emphasising the benefits of clean cornering in the hope that you'll refrain from attempting to abuse a system that now offers greater incentives to those players for whom first place is only worth taking if it's grabbed with style and poise. In conjunction with the heavier artificial intelligence, the ten-second penalty and the more comprehensive driving lessons add much needed weight to the racing side of the *GT4* equation.

In terms of car handling, very little has changed. You still get the extraordinary sense of feedback as you corner at high speeds, that feeling in your hands and brain that you're seconds away from a spin-out that never comes. The physics have clearly been refined [the manner in which the cars respond when they clash together is much more believable than it was last time around] and there's no doubt that *GT4* is the fastest title

GRAN MASTER#5



LUPO GTI

Top speed:

245km/h

0-60:

8.3 seconds

Horsepower:

125bhp

A girl racer designed for boys with tiny hands and even smaller driveways who want to experience the artificial ego boost that comes from owning a car that will never be left standing at the lights.

in the series so far, but besides this everything remains pretty much as it was for *GT3*. And so it should.

The fastest way to remind yourself how astonishingly sweet to the touch this game is, is to visit Citta di Aria ('City in the Air'), a viciously narrow track that winds and rises through the streets of a pulsating Italian market town. Tracks such as this mark a clear departure from the straight-ahead racetracks of previous *GT* titles. Sure, you'll still get plenty of those (the Fuji Speedway being the pick thus far), but this time around you also have a rich seam of city-based, almost arcade-ish circuits to thrash about on.

New York, a mess of billboards and high-rises, is almost equally as impressive as Citta di Aria – but not quite. But then nothing's quite as impressive as the City in the Air, with its extreme dips and rollercoaster bends pitched on inclines so steep you're forced to accelerate just to stay on the road. By comparison, every *GT* circuit you've ever played before looks positively two-dimensional. The hills are alive, people,

Top speed:

0-60:

290km/h

Horsepower:

4.8 seconds

The most phallic vehicle ever (including all space shuttles), the Dodge Viper GTS hangs on to the reserved parking space in our heart thanks to the fact that it now looks better – and even more like a metal penis – than ever before.



SPEED DEMONS Or should that be velocity angels?



WHAT'S WONDA? Is that like, evil Honda or summat?



IT'S SIMPLE No game has ever looked this good. Period.

and they're curvier than busty circles. Apparently the developer used over 50,000 photographs to get the Italian countryside looking this good. PSW would like to personally thank the goggled-eyed Kodak worker who had to process them all.

At this point in the feature, we're obliged to pinch you out of your *GTA* dream by pointing out the two imperfections in an otherwise flawless masterwork. Our first concern: how in the name of Dennis Waterman is Polyphony going to get a game this beautiful working online? That's all part of the 'Gran plan', remember? Kazunori has repeatedly stated in the past that he fully intends to foster a thriving internet community where people can come together to race, to swap tactics and to talk trash. Unless the graphics are severely dumbed down for online races, we predict a nation of Network Adapters shall shriek and wave white flags at the first sign of a six-player race around the Grand

Canyon. Just don't invest too much emotional energy in the prospect of smooth online multiplayer is all we'll say at present. In the words of our Greek landlord, we'll be "as happy as the shitting pig" if they can sort it out, but that's an 'if' that grows increasingly larger the closer we get to it.

Our second concern: why does our early version of the game slow down during races on the more detailed courses when four or more cars are on screen at the same time? We're being facetious. We know the answer to that. It's because our PS2, which is still standing on that cliff top, is being pushed a little further than it's prepared to go. The vicar is slowly sliding his hand up the organ player's leg; she's silently contemplating at which point she should slap it away. Hopefully Polyphony is fully aware that *GT4* is currently banging its head on the ceiling of PS2 and will make the necessary adjustments in time for the eventual release. We don't mind if the final version doesn't look quite this neat if it's a smoother playing experience.

Even with these slight worries trying to start fights at the back of our mind, we still can't believe how lucky.

how truly blessed we are to be among the generation of console owners who'll get to spend the remainder of our lives basking in the soul-warming glow of *GT4*. Gravel-faced miserablists will doubtless moan that, in terms of the single-player game at least, the fourth instalment follows too closely in the footsteps of the third, which itself failed to break any significant new ground after the second. In a way they're right. It could be argued that all that has changed from the first *Gran Turismo* to the fourth is the quality and the size of the packaging, the actual contents remaining untouched by human hand for nigh on seven years now.

PSW readily concedes that the gameplay in *GT4* is far from revolutionary, but its sheer scale and staggering beauty make it a title that demands the full glare of your attention, like it or not. Now go back to the start of this feature and start reading again. Repeat until you hear the metallic thump of game-store shelves buckling under the incredible weight of the biggest game in the history of the universe.



R: RACING



THE FASHIONABLE THING TO SAY ABOUT *R: RACING* is that it's *Ridge Racer* in *Gran Turismo*'s clothing. "Tonight Matthew I'm going to be a serious driving game," it's said to mutter, before drifting into a cloud of dry ice, pivoting at the top of the stairs and waving to the crowd, only to re-emerge with the *Queer Eye 5* after the ad break as a fully-fledged racing simulator, complete with Gran Prix tracks and a refined handling system. So it's said.

Strictly speaking, this isn't an actual *Ridge Racer* game. Well it is. And it isn't. It's a spin-off, a branch growing ever further from the gnarled old trunk with every passing season. Where the original *Ridge Racer* was throwaway, *R: Racing* aims to be deep-rooted and long term. That's the basic gist of the *Gran Turismo* analogy. While it's not without a dash of truth – there's no escaping the fact that *R: Racing* is far more sensible, far more straight-laced than its parent title – it doesn't quite tell the whole story. Because this isn't the driving simulation that some would have you believe. Pay close

enough attention, play it for long enough and you'll notice a glint in the eye and a twang in the voice that reminds you that you're in the company of an old friend. In short, this isn't *Ridge Racer* impersonating *GT4*. This is *Ridge Racer* growing old gracefully. There's a difference.

The three characteristics that separate *Ridge Racer* Game from Normal Driving Game: 1) The game camera. The action must be viewed from the bumper's perspective. It has to be. No other camera angle will do. It's the view a seagull would have, had said bird rather foolishly assumed that you were planning on swerving into the oncoming traffic in order to allow it to continue feasting on the carcass of an equally foolish mouse, who had, some three hours previously, idiotically believed that the seagull was being genuine when he offered him a piggy-back ride as far as the end of the road. You thus become the seagull, mangled into the front grill of a five-speed battering ram, bleating meekly while flapping a broken wing in desperation as the final moments of your insanely pointless seagull life flash before you at

RACING MASTER#1



AUDI R8

Top speed:

0-60:

Horsepower:

330km/h

3.3 seconds

659bhp

Buy one, then scratch all the German flags off in an effort to expunge this sick-making beast of the vague stench of grossly unfashionable central European-ness. You shouldn't be allowed to drive one of these. Seriously. It's not safe.



BEHOLD THE RETURN OF A TRUE LEGEND, THE ALMIGHTY *RIDGE RACER*. BUT MUCH HAS CHANGED SINCE WE LAST SAW THIS ARCADE TITAN. COULD WE HAVE A SERIOUS RIVAL TO *GRAN TURISMO 4* AT LONG LAST? MAYBE...



| | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| ● TYPE: | DRIVING |
| ● PUBLISHER: | ELECTRONIC ARTS |
| ● DEVELOPER: | NAMCO |
| ● ETA: | MARCH |
| ● ONLINE: | NO |

RACING MASTER#2



DETOMASO PANTERA

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| Top speed: | 256km/h |
| 0-60: | 6.0 seconds |
| Horsepower: | 305bhp |

The kind of motor you wouldn't be ashamed of taking your porn star girlfriend home to meet the coke-addled parents in. It gives plenty away in terms of sheer power to some of *R: Racing's* more famous cars, but there's nothing cooler.

300km/h. The bumper-cam is the only way to see *R: Racer*. Actually, it isn't. You can play from just behind the car – a spoiler's eye view if you will – but if you're looking to revisit the spirit of *Ridge Racer's* past, if you want an experience that even approximately equates to the one you had the first time you played the original arcade machine, the night you gave Julie Turner a love bite on the ferris wheel (the ferris wheel being a euphemism for the front bottom) then set the camera down between the two headlights and prepare for a speedrush so intense a vast tsunami of pre-vomit saliva shall gush from your open mouth, forcing you to increase your grip on the horribly moistened pad.

GRIMACE TO THE MUSIC

The second defining attribute of the *Ridge Racer* game, number two in our list of three, is the music. Two characteristics that separate *Ridge Racer* Music from Normal Driving Game Music: a) Has to be techno. b) Has to be really, really, really nasty techno – the kind

listened to exclusively by amateur retards living directly above you, who make it their life's work to hunt down the music that sounds most like a gin hangover and then turn up the bass, place the speakers over your bed and play it at excessive volumes late at night. *R: Racing* is only too glad to oblige. The soundtrack is positively ungodly. It's Culture Beat to the power of 2 Unlimited times 808 State. As you hammer through the streets of Monaco, the vulgar sound of idiot and drum machine working in perfect harmony filling the room, you remember why it is that Television, the god of home entertainment, gifted you with a remote control with which to turn down the volume. You'll love it at the same time. It's *Ridge Racer* innit?

The third and final mark of the *Ridge Racer* game: the powerslide. Just as every good song needs a chorus, so every good game needs to have a hook, a move, a weapon or a character that anchors you to your seat every time the real world tugs on your leash and threatens to haul you away. The original *Ridge Racer*




// R: RACING IS A GAME FRESH OUT OF THE BATH WITH HAIR SO CLEAN IT SQUEAKS AND A FRESHLY SHAMPOOED PUBIC THAT LOOKS LIKE A BLOW-DRIED GENE WILDER. //

had dramatically over-the-top handling, a cartoon likeness of the real thing that allowed you to swing your motor around hairpin bends with an insane degree of control. Getting a firm handle on powersliding took an hour or so – it was all about releasing the accelerator, turning into the bend and then flooring it again – but once you'd nailed it you'd never forget the secret. Things aren't quite so easy in *R: Racing*. Sure, you can still do it (which means "ding-ding-ding!" we've got a *Ridge Racer* game on our hands) but you'll need to work a lot harder at mastering it than previously. When people compare *R: Racing* to *GT4*, what they're attempting to say, in their own stupid, simple little way, is that it's not as easy to play as earlier *Ridge Racer* titles. With this in mind, come armed with an extra supply of patience, a couple of spare weekends and ten pre-flexed fingers – all of which should be ready to receive a solid workout and a thorough re-education.

We approve of the new handling. It manages to come to rest atop the happy medium that separates the

RACING MASTER#3



DODGE CHARGER

Top speed: 260km/h

0-60: 5.5 seconds

Horsepower: 300bhp

With a paintjob that makes it look as though it's suffering from a hideous sexually transmitted disease that's slowly working its way along the shaft, the Dodge Charger is a car for the single man with the big leather wallet.

boringly real from the stupidly exaggerated. And it's a good thing that you have to work more at perfecting the powerslide. Bear in mind that the original *Ridge Racer* was designed, first and foremost, as an arcade machine. It wasn't supposed to last you any more than 15 or so minutes. And often it didn't. *R: Racing*, on the other hand, has been created specifically to be enjoyed and digested over a number of weeks. The important thing is that you always feel like you're in control of your vehicle. Whether or not your Subaru WRX STi handles like an actual Subaru WRX STi is a point that neither PSW nor *R: Racing* wishes to get into. Frankly, neither of us care. We're far too busy sitting around in our pants, eating candyfloss and bitching about how much *GT4* loves itself.

R U READY?

Thankfully, *R: Racing* is as easy on the eye as it is on the thumbs. The whole playing experience is incredibly smooth, from opening menu to closing credits. It's a game fresh out of the bath with hair so clean it squeaks,



TOP SPIN But muscle cars can't slide like before.



YOU BITCH! All drivers are rivals, with emotions too.



toenails so perfectly clipped you could run your eyeballs over them, and a shampooed pubic so light and fluffy it looks like a blow-dried Gene Wilder. It's as fast and as judder-free as you'd expect, the car models solid yet temptingly deformable. The whole thing feels sturdy as an oak wardrobe. We like looking at it.

Sadly the courses aren't as vibrant as the street circuits of the original game. This is almost entirely due to the fact that large portions of *R: Racing* are grounded in the real world – the real world being not quite as nice to look at as the fictional world – as anyone who knows the difference between Canterbury and the Garden of Eden will be able to tell you. Developer Namco has made a concerted (token) effort to brighten up the raceways by using hot air balloons and ferris wheels (that being a fairground ride and not a euphemism for a southern ladybit) to fill the vast expanses of wide open space that make Planet Earth such a dreary place to visit, but the difference this makes is negligible. Even the spectators are bored. So bored that they can't even be

bothered to move. We don't blame them. "Don't move along people. There's nothing to see here."

THE EVER-BENDING STORY

In order to prove once and for all that it doesn't think it's *GT4*, *R: Racing* features a story mode. And it's brilliant. No, wait a second, it's shit. Or is it? It's impossible to say for certain, so magnificently camp is the tone of the narrative. We made extensive notes on the first half an hour of the story. We needn't have bothered, as you can see by browsing the single, crumpled Post-It note laid out before us: 'Female ambulance driver. Man: "Where did you learn to drive like that? Join my team." Woman: "OK." Race, win, race, win, race, win. Meet other female driver, one with big boobs. Man those boobs are big. Bitch bitch bitch. Race, win, race, win, race, win. The end.'

You can see why we're unsure. At times it's so ridiculous you can't help but love it. And it's also brilliantly sexist, a recurring motif being the man astounded that a girl could ever do anything as good >

RACING MASTER#4



HONDA INTEGRA

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| Top speed: | 235km/h |
| 0-60: | 6.2 seconds |
| Horsepower: | 192bhp |

Have you noticed how much shinier *R: Racing's* cars are than *GT4's*? Kazunori should be ashamed of himself, sending his motors out without giving them a good spit and polish beforehand. The Integra is the shiniest of all.



// CONTAINED HEREIN IS ONE OF THE VERY FEW MALTESERS OF NEWNESS TO BE FOUND IN THE JELLY BABY-HEAVY BAG OF LOLLIES THAT THE DRIVING GENRE HAS BECOME. //

RACING MASTER#5



RENAULT ALPINE 1600

Top speed: 220km/h
0-60: 6.7 seconds
Horsepower: 155bhp

Another moderately powerful motor that looks, sounds and smells far better than it drives. Thankfully you'll never get up enough speed to seriously damage yourself, but the muggy handling can still cause problems.

as he can. Ridiculousness and sexism – good and good. But then something truly cringe-making happens and you begin furiously revising your opinion. Suddenly it's cheesy and shallow and a bit girly.

When you're submerged within the Story mode you're as far away from both the original *Ridge Racer* premise and *GT4* as you're ever going to get. Perhaps that's why we like it so much [provided that we do like it]. It feels completely different from anything we've ever played before, even *TOCA Race Driver*, which had a story, but nothing like this. Whatever. There's no denying the fact that the story makes you want to play on, even if it is just to laugh as yet another clunking cut-scene limps past you, waving the desperate hello of an old friend who only wants you to let him into your house so he can escape the youths chasing him around on motorised scooters throwing fireworks at him.

Let's talk numbers. Previews of driving games can always be boiled down to a postage stamp of raw data. Here's *R: Racing*'s: 35 cars, 14 circuits, four game modes.

The motors will be readily familiar to anyone with even a vaguely speeding interest in motorsports. From the rally stable we have such mud-guffing staples as the Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution and the Peugeot 206. From the clammy niche of the Japan Gran Touring Championship ooze forth such Far Eastern gunk as the Takata Honda NSX, the Esso Toyota Supra and the Calsonic Nissan Skyline. And from the US, home of the five-door killing machine, comes the Saleen S7 R and the Dodge Viper Competition Coupe.

You'll be able to fanny around under the bonnet of any of the 35 cars in the game, but only to a certain degree. Before the race (and apparently during it) you're given the opportunity to fiddle with eight sliders, each of which relates to a basic aspect of how your car performs – steering, brake power, acceleration, that kind of thing. It's all very simple, presumably in an effort to pacify both the cretins who don't want to have to think about anything and the bores who do.

You'll know a handful of the circuits too, like Monaco and Suzuka, particularly Suzuka if *Ridge Racer* was



RACING MASTER#0



NISSAN CALSONIC SKYLINE

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| Top speed: | 285km/h |
| 0-60: | 3.9 seconds |
| Horsepower: | 435bhp |

Fat like a big fat burger, the Nissan Calsonic Skyline is a flesh-faced racing machine that emits the fume of cheap Eastern European meat being cooked moodily. Not so much car as carnivore. Vegans beware.

anywhere near the *Pole Position* machine in your local arcade. And if you've been to Japan recently you might recognise some of the landmarks of downtown Yokohama as you weave through the tight bends of one of *R: Racing*'s more devilish street courses.

Game modes. Once you're past the Story mode on the menu screen you begin re-treading old ground. Time Attack, Versus, Arcade. Very little here to raise the tempo of your heartbeat. That said, we have been promised a hearty range of extras to be unlocked through sustained success in the single-player Story mode. Quite what form that additional material will take – whether it be more cars, more tracks or new game modes – is one of the few answers the *PSW* superbrain can't provide you with at present. We're working on it though.

PRESSURE DROP

If it's another hit of innovation you're after, you're better off looking at the actual races themselves rather than the game modes. For buried away under a vast

mountain of competent – if not outstanding – racing action lurks a sparkling diamond of ingenuity: the inclusion of a pressure gauge that allows you to out-psyche your computer opponents. Drive in the slipstream of an opposing car for long and you'll notice a small meter in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen beginning to gradually build. That right there is the force of your mental pressure crushing the shrieking cranium of your panicking rival into a peanut of intense hurt. The longer you can sustain this for, the more erratic their driving becomes. Make them pay. Psychologically damage them, then cause physical injury.

Before you snigger so hard you strain facial muscles, there's something you seriously should know: you have a pressure gauge too. As your rear-view mirror fills with the face of a laughing rival, you feel the steering become increasingly twitchy. It's a lovely touch, one of the few Maltesers of newness to be found in the jelly baby-heavy bag of lolly mix that the driving genre has become.

Expect this feature to become industry-standard by the end of 2004.

So then, part rally game, part F1 game, part fume-added soap opera. You could say that *R: Racing* hasn't quite decided what it wants to be when it grows up. Is it going to be an astro-physicist or is it going to be Nudge from Hey Dad? We prefer to think that it knows exactly what it wants to be. And that's professionally confused. It wants to be a game that's neither an arcade racer nor a simulation, but rather a canny blend of the two. You want quick and easy? Fine. Long and hard? Fine too.

There's a danger here of course. If the wheels fall off *R: Racing* between now and its eventual release, it could easily find itself cast as a jack-of-all-trades, master of none. But if it moves up a gear, if it manages to offer a solid roster of racing across the whole spread of game modes, we'll have a real game on our hands.

All of which means that the *Ridge Racer* revolution will most definitely be televised. We strongly advise you tune in. Just be ready to turn the volume down.



// GENTLEMEN, START YOUR ENGINES...



// GT CARS - LOOKING SO GOOD, WE MIGHT JUST MARRY THEM IN A SMALL, QUIET CEREMONY.



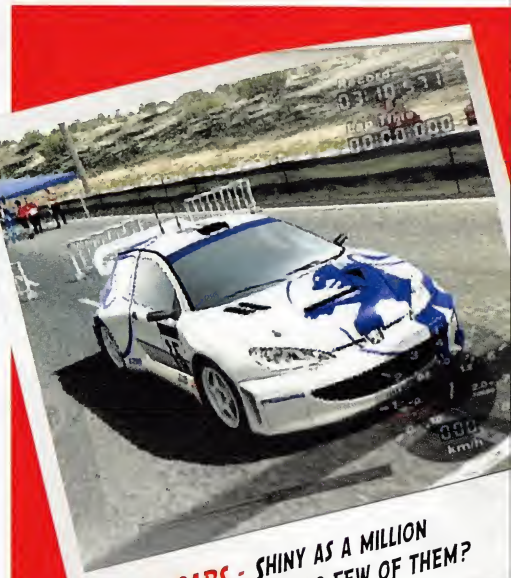
// GT TRACKS - LOVELIER THAN A LESBIAN PILLOW FIGHT, TOUGHER THAN CONCRETE SHARK.



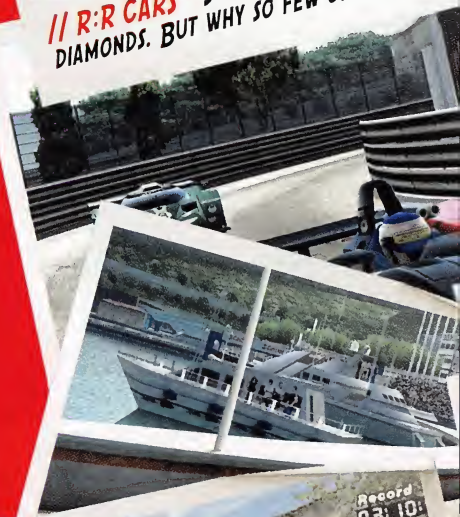
// GT RALLY - NO LARKING AROUND WITH THIS NOW - IT'S AS SERIOUS AS RACING EVER GETS.



// GT HANDLING - YOU'RE ON THE EDGE OF YOUR SEAT, BUT YOU'LL NEVER LOSE CONTROL.



// R:R CARS - SHINY AS A MILLION DIAMONDS. BUT WHY SO FEW OF THEM?



// R:R RALLY - ALL THE SLIDING, SPINNING AND TWITCHY RACING YOU COULD WISH FOR.

THE RACE BETWEEN *GT4* AND *R: RACING* BEGINS IN EARNEST. STAND BACK AND PREPARE TO CHOKE ON THE FUMES OF EXCITEMENT...



// *R:R* TRACKS - PUT SOME LIPPY ON, LOVE - EVERYTHING LOOKS UNNATURALLY PLAIN HERE.



// *RR* HANDLING - WHAT. NO MORE DUMB POWERSLIDES? WELL, MAYBE JUST A FEW...

/// CARS

It's difficult to keep a straight face when comparing *R: Racing*'s ramshackle 35-berth garage with *GT4*'s sky-tickling multistorey giant. *GT4* has 465 more vehicles than *R: Racing*. That number again: 465. Repeat, four, sixerer, fiver. That's a fairly huge difference, even if a large proportion of the motors included in Polyphony's ode to the joy of wheels are liable to be shit-heaps that you'll have little or no interest in driving. But *GT4*'s cars aren't just greater in number, they're also greater in both shape and shine. That said, the fact that neither game allows you to smash up the bodywork of your car leaves the pair of them trailing behind the current crop of rally games.

RACE LEADER>>>> **GRAN TURISMO 4**

/// TRACKS

We need to make the distinction here between the way the tracks look and the way the tracks play. That *GT4*'s have the greater visual impact goes without saying. Don't speak, just compare our footage of the Grand Canyon course. Be sure to clock the photo-realistic horizon being manhandled like a toddler by a groaning PS2, with some footage of any one of *R: Racing*'s nameless, faceless racing circuits and you'll equip yourself with all the proof you'll ever need. That *GT4*'s circuits are the better designed in terms of challenge, replay value and variety is a claim you make with significantly less certainty.

RACE LEADER>>>> **TIED FOR THE LEAD**

/// HANDLING

It's impossible for *R: Racing* to compete with *GT4* when it comes to overall feel, Polyphony having had seven years to perfect the handling in their title as opposed to Namco's one. The physics in *R: Racing* are impressively robust considering its arcade heritage – read this sentence aloud in the most patronising tone of voice you can muster to get the full effect – but it's still miles behind *GT4* in terms of realism, complexity and depth. There's no shame in that. Every driving game in the history of the world is miles behind *GT4* in this regard – that's a measure of how good it is. For 'The Real Driving Simulator' read 'The Ultimate Game Ever'.

RACE LEADER>>>> **GRAN TURISMO 4**

/// CHALLENGE

The artificial intelligence category. In short: which of the two games features the brighter, more astute rival drivers? The answer in two words and a number: 'Gran Turismo' and '4.' It's no exaggeration to say that the second biggest surprise awaiting those who strip naked and sacrifice themselves before Polyphony's latest (besides the fact that it looks even better than you thought it would) is that the races are more competitive than anything you've experience before by a half-dozen turns of the wrench. It's good to know that for the first time in the history of the series, *Gran Turismo* will at long last offer proper racing to complement the proper driving.

RACE LEADER>>>> **GRAN TURISMO 4**

/// GAME MODES

Comparing *GT4*'s career mode to *R: Racing*'s story mode is like comparing donkeys to gravity. That's as much to say, they're so completely different it's hard to decide for definite which is better. *GT4*'s modes are incredibly serious and straight-laced, *R: Racing*'s are stupid and full of girls with heavy bosoms. It depends on what you're after – a quick slap of concentrated excitement or an extended shower under the tap of quiet, long-term enjoyment? We can't answer that for you unless we get to know you better. And we can't get to know you better unless you tell us your new address. Come on. We're completely over that thing with your mum this time.

RACE LEADER>>>> **DEAD LEVEL**

/// GRAPHICS

Bearing in mind that our mouths dry out at the very mention of *GT4*'s visuals, so dauntingly great are they, it won't surprise you to hear that it wins this particular category with embarrassing ease. *R: Racing* offers only token resistance, its compendium of trackside clichés (hot air balloons? Oh please!) a feeble-wristed admission of defeat. As much as we'd love to, we don't need to impress on you again how good *GT4* looks. Just know that it does. (Those who remain unconvinced should set aside five seconds to flick through the previous 14 pages, concentrating exclusively on the screenshots. We'll wait here... See what we mean? It's a one-horse race.)

RACE LEADER>>>> **GRAN TURISMO 4**

OVERALL

No need to feign surprise. You knew from the outset that *GT4* was never in danger of being beaten by a rank outsider. As much as we like *R: Racing*, the simple fact is that it suddenly looks small and somewhat insignificant when stood next to a title of the stature of *GT4*. Like we said, there's no shame in finishing second in this particular race. Few games could ever hope to withstand the fearsome heat that radiates from one of the very rare modern classics.

OVERALL WINNER >>>

GRAN TURISMO 4

■ **FEATURE** | 101 GAMES

■ Resident Evil
Outbreak

■ Metal Gear Solid 3

■ Syphon Filter
The Omega Strain

■ Deadly Skies III

101 WEAPONS IN THE WAR AGAINST BOREDOM

**PSW EXPOSES THE BIGGEST PLAYSTATION2
GAMES HEADING YOUR WAY
OVER THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS!**



METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

The only fault we expect to find with *MGS3* is that it'll be too short. Because, like its predecessors, it'll be frighteningly dense rather than needlessly lengthy. In fact, we wager it'll have more detail and gameplay in one achingly beautiful forest clearing than most games have in three lackluster sequels, and in some near-subliminal way it will push the cause of gaming onwards into the twenty-first century. We know this because *Metal Gear Solid 3* is the work of Hideo Kojima, a man more attuned to PlayStation2, more in control of the creative process and more committed to producing amazing games than any other person on the planet. It cannot fail.

Out →→ OCTOBER

SNACK TIME Eat wildlife, but leave that butterfly.

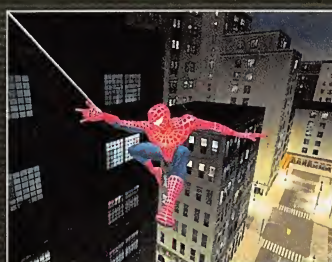


KILLER SMILE You now see Brosnan's grin. Bonus.

JAMES BOND 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

It's goodbye Bond's eye view and hello Bond's smarmy face as the suave superspy moves ever so subtly from shooter to action game, making everything a ton more cinematic in the process. Especially as Shannon Elizabeth and Heidi Klum are stepping up to the Bond bed to get fully de-briefed. Jaws makes an appearance, and there're more than a few glorious explosions. Make no mistake, this is shaping up to be the biggest, Bond-iest 007 title yet. Here's hoping.

Out →→ MARCH



SPIDER-MAN 2

Spidey's out to score another double whammy with a top film and wholly enjoyable game in 2004. And from what we've seen he's well on his way, with a great-looking title that has you dropping down from the simple web-slinging of the first game to wandering the streets and solving random crimes, superhero-style. New enemies such as the movie sequel's big, bad Doctor Octopus as well as The Lizard make things tough, and improved graphics make the sticky-fingered one look all the more impressive.

Out →→ JUNE



V8 SUPERCARS 2

The greedy Xbox has snagged *V8 2* for six whole months, but we're not going to get all defensive about it. Or even start grumbling. The fact is we don't even want it until then anyway. We'll have the fantastic *Gran Turismo 4* and *R: Racing* to keep us firmly occupied until Codemasters gets around to releasing *V8 2* on PS2. And, as history has shown during the bloody PS2 vs Xbox wars, we'll doubtless get a better version anyway, stuffed with extra options, more cars and fully functioning online play. Yay us.

Out →→ JUNE

FINAL FANTASY X-2

It's not *Final Fantasy XI*, it's not *Final Fantasy XII*, it's the sequel – keep up with us now – to *Final Fantasy X*, chronicling the continuing adventures of Tidus, Wakka and co. But it's mainly Yuna and her girly mates running around in tiny pants under waterfalls. It's a sign of *Final Fantasy X*'s popularity that this is the first time there's been a direct sequel to any of the titles in the series, which usually re-invents the same old story from scratch every time. Those who like their adventuring Japanese and their ladies boy-like will be loving it.

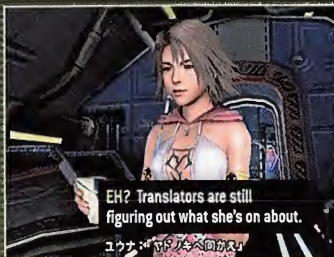
Out →→ MARCH



FINAL CURTAIN Expect this to be the end for the FFX characters.



X PHILE PSW loved FFX as though it were a wealthy brother.



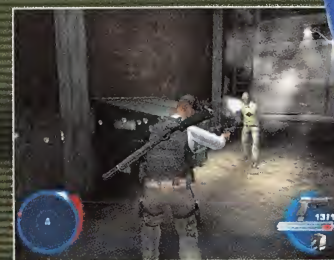
EH? Translators are still figuring out what she's on about.



STORM COMING We applaud this effort to reinvent the military genre.

GHOST RECON: JUNGLE STORM

Tactical action bursts onto PS2 in the form of the uncompromisingly grim and exhilarating *Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm*. Control your troops by voice or team up with internet partners to bring down the terrorist menace in the jungles of Cuba and Colombia, with one-shot-one-kill gameplay and realistic injuries making for short, sharp and violent matches. Online gaming doesn't get much more intense than this. Check out the review on page 74. Out →→ FEBRUARY



SYPHON FILTER: THE OMEGA STRAIN

Syphon Filter online? It's coming along very well indeed thank you. Those of you who have been following our coverage of *The Omega Strain* will have a slightly better understanding of why it is that our pulses quicken slightly at the mention of the name. Frankly, it's one of the few multiplayer titles we've played so far that actually seems to benefit from being played online. Teams of four are required to coordinate their actions tightly to complete the task at hand, meaning there's no scope here for selfishness or the pursuit of solo glory. Mark our words, and mark them in a permanent marker, *The Omega Strain* could well be the lifeboat Sony needs to pull its Network adapter to safety.

Out →→ MARCH



TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2

Our best guess for the sixth *Tony Hawk's* game is that it'll be a minor refinement of the slightly scrappy, but wholly wonderful gameplay from *Tony Hawk's Underground*, as opposed to the old *Pro Skater* series. Meaning truly free-roaming gameplay, a new and deeper story and much better interaction with other characters. Oh, and cars that don't handle like giant skateboards would be a bonus too.

Out →→ NOVEMBER



MECH A MESS The vehicle combat promises to be noisy and chaotic.



THIS IS A MAN'S WORLD And you play as a woman. But don't worry, she's hard.

STARCRAFT: GHOST

StarCraft is a PC game so terribly dull that it's possible to send yourself sterile by just thinking about it. As you mentally pore over its dense resource-based real-time strategy, each and every sperm in your ballbag resigns itself to a life of bachelorhood and decides it's best for all concerned if it takes its own life right there and then. *StarCraft: Ghost*, on the other hand, is a potentially massive PlayStation2 game based around such simple pleasures as running, shooting and piloting expensive vehicles. This is tactical action, and hence not boring. And not stupid either. Should be quite something. Something good.

Out → → MARCH



SUPER NOVA Meet Nova. She can turn herself invisible. Nice.



PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4

So long as Konami can find a way to slide the pork sausage of online play into the meaty purse of *Pro Evolution 4*, PSW will be happier than a balloon animal on a windy day. Other demands: 1) Proper player names. 2) Proper stadium names. 3) New music. And 4) The ability to dive at will. Make it so, Konami, or prepare for a review that pivots on the word 'however'.

Out → → OCTOBER



MAFIA

Mired in the golden treacle of 1930s violence, a time when the man who beat you to death with the frozen aubergine would have the common courtesy not to touch the face, *Mafia* is *Vice City*'s grandfather. And the front-page news is, it looks good. The period cars are heavyweight and appealing, the game environment busy and surprisingly absorbing.

Out → → FEBRUARY



LEGENDS OF WRESTLING SHOWDOWN

The *LOW* series keeps getting better, with the makers digitally restoring the more crusty has-beens to their baby-oil-covered prime. The grappler-ometer now tells us there are 70 wrestlers, from 'Rowdy' Roddy Piper and Jake 'The Snake' to The Ultimate Warrior. And this time, the Career mode's been expanded to encompass a whole retro-themed story.

Out → → APRIL

HARDWARE

TWO PIECES OF HIGHLY ADVANCED GAMING KIT.



PSP

What is it?
It's the Walkman of the twenty-first Century. It's the PlayStation Portable (or PSP).

What can it do?
It's a powerful, fully 3D handheld games platform. As well as playing PSP specific games via Universal Media Disks smaller than a minidisk, it also plays MP3s and videos on its 16:9 ratio backlit screen. Every major developer has teams working on PSP games, so expect pocket-sized versions of all the major PS2 franchises over the next few years.

How much?
We'd expect to pay anything up to \$700 at launch. New games could set you back as little as \$60, which is great news.

When can I get one?
We can hopefully look forward to PSPs in our stockings next Christmas if Sony releases the PSP in Australia at the same time as Japan. Unlikely. Hmph.



PSX

What is it?
It's Sony's concept for an all-in-one media centre allowing you to record video, listen to music and play games. PlayStation2 games, obviously. They're not stupid.

What can it do?
As well as a fully functional PlayStation2 in that ice-white shell, there's a hard drive for use with certain games and for recording hour after hour of television, which you can burn onto DVDs with the built-in recorder. There's an Ethernet adaptor for broadband online gaming, too.

How much?
Two different versions of the PSX are available in Japan, one with a 160GB hard drive at the equivalent of about \$1200, and a 250GB hard drive model costing \$1600. Expect a \$1500 price tag over here.

When can I get one?
It's out now in Japan so expect a traditional six-12 month delay.



OUTRUN 2

PSIW is as weary of reinvented arcade classics as we are of emails that promise "total, oversize arousal". Yet we're making an exception for *OutRun 2*. Why? Because the first time we saw it in action, our hearts pounded up into our throats, before leaping out of our open mouths like pulsating toads. It's been ages since Sega delivered a game to match the jaw slackening thrills of

Daytona USA and *Sega Rally*, but *OutRun 2* should be just as good if not better than both of the old timers. We'll have to wait and see. And the sprinkling of parsley atop this car-shaped egg flan? *OutRun 2* is thought to be appearing solely on PS2, despite having been designed using Xbox technology. That's super bad.

Out → NOVEMBER

DOWNHILL DOMINATION

Snow, slopes, tricks, slides, ramps, men with hilariously wide shoes. It sounds like snowboarding, but it's *Downhill Domination*, the biking game that sticks you on a two-wheeled stick of aluminium and throws you headfirst down gigantic slopes complete with forests, towns and huge boulders to hit entertainingly. We don't want to say it'll be *SSX* on bikes, but that's what it'll be like. If it's any good. Which we think it just might be. Full review next issue. Just remember: it's manic.

Out → MARCH



BELL RINGER You wouldn't believe some of the tricks.

RUGBY LEAGUE 2

The chances of this hitting shelves in 2004? About as good as the Roosters making the eight. That is, we'd be very surprised if it (or they) didn't. Needs plenty of work though if it's going to impress us though. A bit like the Wests Tigers. Go Benji!

Out → DECEMBER



WOW It's rugby league! Go out and buy it quickly!



CASTLEVANIA: LAMENT OF INNOCENCE

If you haven't been following our *Castlevania* coverage, you might not be aware of just how stunning this vamp-bashing action title is looking. You play the original member of the Belmont clan as he fights the first ever incarnation of the Count, as well as an absolute horde of gothic-themed nasties. With five different areas of the castle to explore from the start, there's plenty of mad adventuring potential here. Likely to appeal to hardcore gamers who remember the aged gem. Normal, more social types will find it a more engrossing and spectacular alternative to the disappointing *Devil May Cry 2*. But, it has to be said, the name does sound really, really gay. And rude.

Out → FEBRUARY



MONSTER HUNTER

Not content with putting *Resident Evil* online with *Outbreak*, the same boffins at Capcom have created *Monster Hunter* to be played over the internet with three friends. Funnily enough it's about hunting monsters with fellow broadbanders.

Out → JULY



BIG COUNTRY Escape the urban raceways in style.

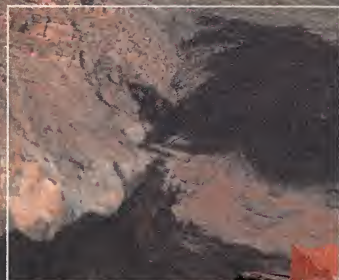
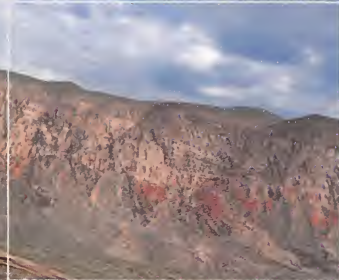


JUST GRAND Take a trip along the Canyon and gasp.

GRAN TURISMO 4

Much has changed since we last saw GT4. Most impressively, the game is now peopled by human-shaped polygon formations, who drive the convertibles, man the pit crews and stand at the side of the track and pretend to be impressed by your driving. For a better idea of what to expect from the final release, hang onto the undercarriage of a supersonic helicopter headed for Japan and pick up a copy of *Gran Turismo Prologue*, a condensed version of the game available exclusively in the Far East. Our Japanese cousins (our mum's sister lives in Tokyo) tell us great things. Safe to say, GT4 is set to create the biggest waves of 2004. Unless that meteor we saw through our telescope last night actually does collide with Africa. Which is unlikely.

Out → MAY



DOWNTOWN The GT40 tears up Times Square.



CROWD CONTROL The driver aimed for the puddle.

THE BEST OF THE REST

HIGHLY-EXPLOSIVE AMMUNITION TO FEED INTO YOUR PS2.



NARC: This third-person action title has you arresting drug-added psychos in the manner of the ancient arcade title. Get bored of the plot and you can always solve random street crime, *True Crime*-style. Looks decent enough.

OUT → APRIL

KILL SWITCH: Like we tell you on page 88, *Kill Switch* exists only to provide you with mad gunfights.

OUT → MARCH

VAN HELSING: The game of the film has you as the titular Doc taking on Dracula and the Wolfman in some new and outlandish forms.

OUT → MAY

MADDEN NFL 2005: Our best guess is that it's going to feature more customisable options, an even deeper Ultimate Career mode and better online support.

OUT → SEPTEMBER

PUYO POP FEVER: Sega's classic puzzler is making its way to PS2 with an all-new multiplayer mode that adds 3D elements to spice up the bubble-popping gameplay.

OUT → APRIL

LETHAL SKIES 2: Not to be confused with *Deadly Skies III*, this flight sim features 19 present-day craft in a near-future apocalypse.

OUT → MARCH

URBAN FREESTYLE SOCCER: With mini-games, international five-a-side street teams with 'individual catchphrases' and combo systems, *Urban Freestyle* clearly wants to be the *NBA Street* of footie games.

OUT → FEBRUARY

MAXIMO 2: More of the same platform based, cartoonish fighting gubbins from the diminutive warrior, only this time everything's looking even more outlandish.

OUT → MARCH

DYNASTY WARRIORS 4: XTREME LEGENDS: A standalone add-on pack adds new features like randomly generated skirmishes

and the ability to power your characters up and then transfer them back to the original game.

OUT → JANUARY

DR SEUSS' CAT IN THE HAT: Don't be shocked, but they've only gone and turned a kids' movie into a cheesy platform game! If you can read this without moving your lips, this game isn't for you.

OUT → MAY

WWE SMACKDOWN! 6

We're going to go out on a heavily oiled limb here to say that the next installation of the fabled *SmackDown!* series will up the ante in every way. More wrestler-specific careers, more moves, more showcase matches with even more utterly strange pairings, and most of all, more bras and more panties. In fact we'd even settle for less bras and fewer panties. Or even no bras and panties at all. Now that's sports entertainment. While you mentally chew on all, admire this hugely gratuitous photo of flesh-happy wrestling bint Trish Stratus.

Mummy, we feel funny.

OUT → NOVEMBER



NOT SO FAST It'll need to be better than *Need for Speed*.

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS

This street-racing title includes elements from both the car-porn movies, along with 20 cars to soup up to your heart's content. It's got stiff competition from the visually glorious, but ultimately

shallow *Need For Speed Underground*, which is already on the streets, meaning this one needs to deliver more than flashy cut-scenes and starlet cleavage.

OUT → FEBRUARY



KARAOKE STAGE

If you think *EyeToy* makes you look dumb, wait 'til you get a load of the singalong games coming out in 2004. *Karaoke Stage* is the first. You just plug in a USB microphone, sing along to a selection of classic tunes and shriek with horror when the game rates you on your efforts. You can even start an in-game career if you're good enough.

OUT → APRIL



NIGHTSHADE

We desperately wanted to like *Shinobi* on PS2, but it was hard, seeing as how it was about as much fun as death by papercuts. *Nightshade* is the sequel to *Shinobi*, and we're hearing great things about the way the gameplay's been streamlined. You now play as a female ninja with extended wall-running and combat skills. Please Sega. Do it for us.

OUT → FEBRUARY



ONIMUSHA 3

Feast your longing eyes on these superior screens – *Onimusha 3* is obviously pushing the PS2 so hard it's gasping for breath and having to take little sips of water. Celebrated French actor Jean Reno (who's kindly lent his mug to the game) looks awesome showing off his kinky whip. Jubel gets down with – of all things – a giant military robot, and the whole time-travelling, demon-bashing shebang is looking indecently spectacular. With titles like Sega's *Blood Will Tell* looking to cash in should Capcom slip up, it should come as a great relief to *Onimusha* fans that the third installment in the series looks to be the best one yet. We'll have tons more exclusive info on *Onimusha 3* in the next couple of months. Why? Because it's God's own game, that's why. Amen to that brothers and sisters.

OUT → MAY





REND WAY Jean shows off his classic Gallic hospitality.



FROM ONIMUSHA WITH LOVE God alone knows what's going on, but it looks nice.

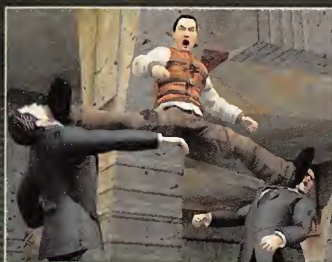


STUNTMAN 2

The original may have turned a nation of gamers into a bunch of screaming, frustrated children, but it hasn't stopped developer Reflections from making a sequel. Although details on

movies are in short supply, we're betting on stunts with flying vehicles, the chance to choose your own cars and vastly shortened loading times.

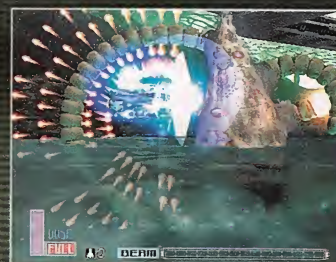
Out → NOVEMBER



BULLETPROOF MONK

We hate movie tie-ins. It's a blanket policy we've got. We also hate the movie *Bulletproof Monk*. So you'd think that we'd hate the game based on the film. Perhaps we will. Only time will tell. At least the bits we've seen so far don't look absolutely terrible. But then the film trailer looked OK too.

Out → FEBRUARY



R-TYPE FINAL

They may not have changed the 2D gameplay for *R-Type's* latest outing, but they've gone overboard on graphical touches to create some amazing-looking levels. An incredible 99 ships are available, plus some bonus craft should that somehow not be enough. Old-school, yes, but good with it.

Out → MARCH



WATCH THE SKIES One to keep an eye on, no question.

DEADLY SKIES III

Imagine a bog-standard PC-style flight sim. Then imagine it remixed through the minds of Japanese madmen and turned into some sort of deadly aerial ballet with all the hardest planes of the last 50 years. Such is *Deadly Skies III*, awash with beautiful models of amazing aircraft and sky-high action, in this sequel to one of PSone's most, uh, unknown titles. Enter into it with an open mind and you'll love it.

Out → FEBRUARY

THE BEST OF THE REST

ANOTHER CACHE OF WEAPONS OF MASS ENTERTAINMENT



PSI-OPS: THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY

A stealthy action title where telekinesis is used to set enemies on fire, control their actions or suck their mind power to kill them. More info on 'Mental Gear Solid' soon.

OUT → JUNE

FORBIDDEN SIREN: Lifelike looks and a soul darker than Satan's arsehole mean *Forbidden Siren* looks set to join *Silent Hill* as a top-quality Japanese survival horror title. Much more on page 36.

OUT → MARCH

HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION: Sega's anti-hero gun for hire and his new streetwise apprentice must uncover the conspiracy that threatens to tear his future world apart. Mainly by using guns. Lots of guns. We hope.

OUT → APRIL

KYA: A boomerang's your weapon of choice in this cartoon-styled action adventure, but it's *Kya*'s ability to tame and straddle wild animals that really gives us the horn.

OUT → FEBRUARY

FIREFIGHTER F.D. 18: Using fire extinguishers should never feature more heavily in games than say, as a way of increasing the level of environmental interaction in an action/adventure. You know, in the beginning of *Rising Sun*. Or in *MGS2*.

OUT → MARCH

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2005: We don't even wait for the press releases these days. We just add a year on, write about the improved control system and move onto something a little more interesting.

OUT → OCTOBER

WHIPLASH: As a doggy fugitive escaping from an animal lab, you must use your chained canine companion as a weapon in this wacky action adventure. Barking mad by the sound of it. Sorry.

OUT → FEBRUARY

MOJO! *Mojo!* has you playing as a 'highly energised sphere' through 100 levels of brain-damaging puzzles and twitchy, reflex-driven challenges, either on your own or co-operatively with a friend. Odd.

OUT → JANUARY

MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES: The 22 'classic' arcade games here include *Gauntlet*, *Defender*, *Smash TV* and *Paperboy*. It'll be 'budget'.

OUT → FEBRUARY

R: RACING

Ridge Racer, it would seem, has finally grown up. No longer content to chase around the same old track time and again as it was as a teenager, the series is now fully pubic and rebranded as a *Gran Turismo*-style simulation, complete with in-depth tuning options and licensed motors. Though we advise fans of the original to insulate themselves against disappointment (it would seem that even the famous *Ridge Racer* slide has been compromised), we're nevertheless confident that good things await those looking for a friendly alternative to Polyphony's diesel-spewing behemoth. And sure, it will be difficult to top the might of the G and bite of the T (as our extended head-to-head comparison on page 40-55 makes obvious), but *R: Racer* still looks the mustard.

Out → MAY



SUPERBURRU The shine on that even beats *Colin 04*.



HONKEY TONK Beat the big boys with a low rider.



LOTUS FOCUS New tracks go for a realistic feel.



SNAKE EYES The Dodge viper looks brilliant.



DRIVER 3

The folks at *Driver* developer Reflections must be hoping their long-awaited effort will stand up to the king of all action crime capers, *Grand Theft Auto Vice City*. But they're keen to stress that *Driver 3* is all about the mad car and bike chases, not free-roaming crime action. They're also keen to stress that from now on we should refer to the game as DRIV3R. Like, wow, how clever.

Out → → MAY



ROGUE TRADER 200 B&H! Get 'em while they're hot.

RISE TO HONOUR

We've been waiting for this martial arts-themed Hong Kong blockbuster for what seems like ages now, and we've still got a couple of months to wait before its April release. We trust that Sony is using the extra time to add in extra smacks, headbutts, haymakers, high kicks and kung fu screams to make Jet Li's game debut a title to remember. And a bit where a little old man beats up an entire gang. That's always cool. Like the look of *True Crime* but not the driving bits? This is the game for you.

Out → → APRIL



TROUBLE GLAZING They don't call him Jet for nowt.



LMA MANAGER 2004

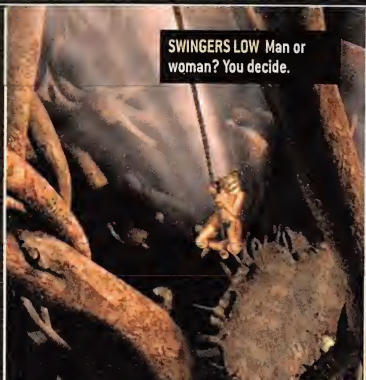
Nothing spreads as much misery and discontent as football management games. Not even famine. Like bad women, they seem to have an innate ability to piss all over you and then leave you gasping for another glassful. The 2004 update to this pedigree brand is bolstered by the signing of a 3D match engine, as well as by the inclusion for the first time of a Fantasy Team mode. February is the month to be shopping around for flame-retardant stress relievers.

Out → → FEBRUARY

KAENA

Based on a computer-generated French cartoon that PSW has zero interest in researching, *Kaena* is an action adventure title that calls to mind the motion picture *The Neverending Story*. The emphasis here is firmly on combo-based fighting. If it can deliver a good dust-up without bogging us down with an overwrought story we'll be licking our bits in quiet satisfaction.

Out → → JULY



SWINGERS LOW Man or woman? You decide.



JOLIE SMILE A face that only Billy Bob could love.

THE BEST OF THE REST

A FULL CLIP OF ARMOUR-PIERCING PS2 BULLETS



IRONSTORM: Alternate universes are almost always worse than actual ones. For more on that see *Ironstorm*, where World War I drags on well into the 1960s. Stealth, shooting, death, levers. No Beatles, Kinks, miniskirts. Got it?
Out → MARCH

NHL 2005: You are but ten months away from another ice hockey game that you neither appreciate nor care about it. It's a crying shame, for *NHL* is one of EA's strongest sports brands.
Out → OCTOBER

SPHINX AND THE CURSED MUMMY

MUMMY: An action adventure described variously as "epic", "enchanted", and "pretty decent, but certainly nothing to hurt yourself over". The first two from the publisher, the last from us.
Out → FEBRUARY

TAK AND THE POWER OF JUJU

It's tempting to give up on this one before you've even finished reading the name, but don't. Because it actually looks very nice. "Nice" meaning colourful and childlike.
Out → MARCH

UNREAL ASSAULT: Little is known of this at present besides the fact that there's no colon separating the *Unreal* from the *Assault*. To us, the lack of punctuation suggests a single-player, story-driven shooter.
Out → TBA

ADIBOO AND THE ENERGY THIEVES

THIEVES: Centres on an obnoxious little kid desperate to throw a spanner in the spokes of a well-meaning robot busily raping planet earth of its natural resources.
Out → JUNE

SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW

TOMORROW: We have nothing new to tell you on *Pandora Tomorrow*, but only because we completely emptied our info-satchel onto pages 28 to 35. Go there now.
Out → MARCH

BLOWOUT: A sideways scrolling shooter using the hyper-advanced technology of PlayStation2 to revive a style that went out with the dinosaurs.
Out → APRIL

HYPER STREET FIGHTER 2: If we're honest, we lost track of the *Street Fighter* series back in the late 1990s. This one promises more old characters. And a few new ones.
Out → MAY

GRADIUS V

Going head to head with *R-Type Final* for title of Mutton Dressed as Lamb 2004, *Gradius V* has been given a similar pseudo-3D makeover and is set to graphically stun, with the traditional five-weapon system to get you through the endless swarms of enemies as your ship scrolls endlessly through side-on space. Whatever the quality of the notoriously difficult finished product, we're sure we won't be able to get beyond level two. It's not our fault, our pads are screwed. The game's running too fast. Our eyes are broken. Whatever.
Out → APRIL



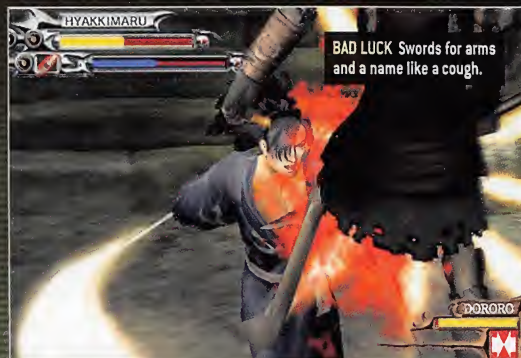
SHIP AHOY Only those with ninja reflexes need apply.

FINAL FANTASY XI

Allow us to explain the difference between *Final Fantasy XI* and *Final Fantasy X-2* in the most patronising way possible: *X-2* is the mongoloid half-brother of part ten, *XI* is entirely new. It's online, and needs the PS2 hard drive. So we're still suspicious.
Out → OCTOBER



FINAL FIGHT Massive online world, but at what cost?



BAD LUCK Swords for arms and a name like a cough.

BLOOD WILL TELL

In which you play Hyakkimaru, a young man cursed to walk the earth with giant swords for arms. *Blood Will Tell* is half *Onimusha*, half *Devil May Cry 2*, all Japanese. Early impressions are certainly favourable.
Out → JULY



TRANSFORMERS ARMADA

We're promised great things from this locally-developed mechanical action adventure in which you take on the role of the heroic Autobots fighting against the evil Decepticons for control of the small and oh-so-collectible Mini-cons. Fighting takes place in robot form, complete with metal fists and lasers, but when you need to travel you can switch into vehicle mode and bomb around at greatly increased speeds. Forget all that, though. The most important thing about *Transformers Armada* is that they've got the sound that sort of goes ick-o-cko-ick when they transform. It's all we need to enjoy this game.
Out → MAY



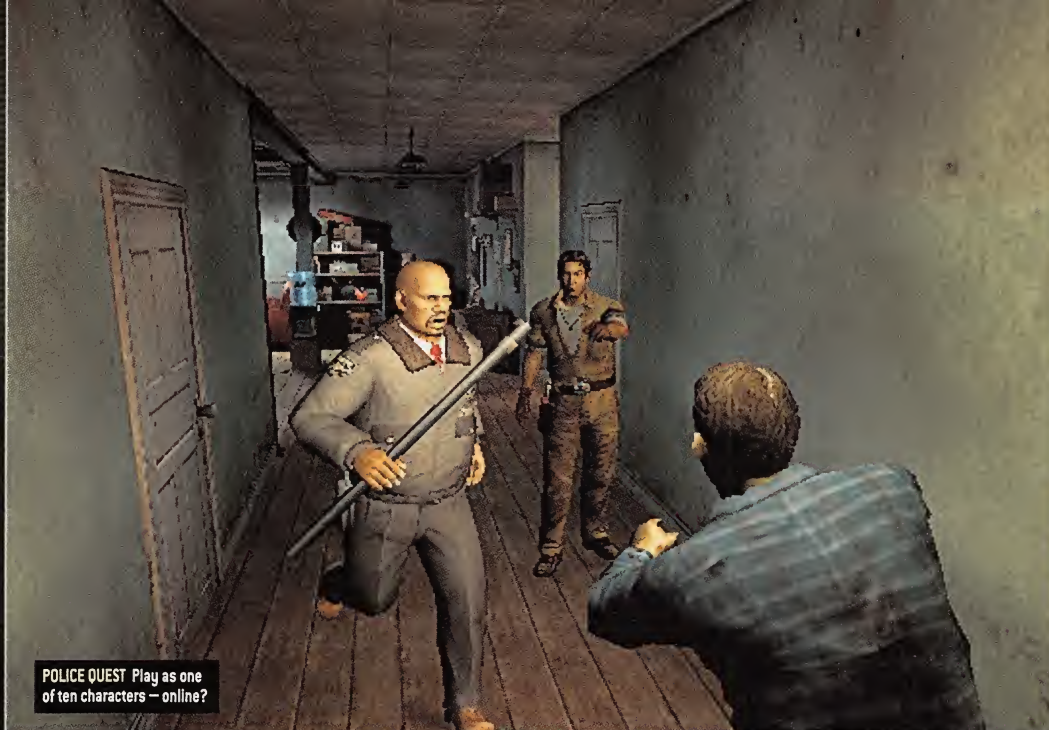
PRIME DIRECTIVE Autobot boss Optimus brings the pain.



TREE TREK Armada's set in a huge forest. But why?



WHATACON Minicons help you improve abilities.



POLICE QUEST Play as one of ten characters — online?



HE'S BEHIND YOU Panto season in Raccoon City.



RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK

OK, so we may never play it online, which is grotesquely, monstrously unfair, but with the new single-player mode we'll at least get to explore the sewers, strongholds and inevitable statue puzzles of Raccoon City in some form. Ah, we're not even convincing ourselves. Get on your knees now, everybody, and pray to Stimulo the multi-armed, tiger-riding God of Games that Capcom will see the light and manage to get *Outbreak* online. Or we may be in for some extremely lonely adventuring later this year.

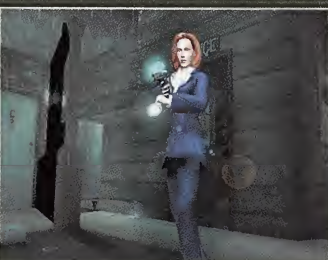
Out → APRIL



THE GETAWAY 2

It's all still very hush-hush at the moment, but we've got some info on the sequel to the Getaway, currently being shaped and tweaked in Sony's London studios. Starring Mark Hammond, the first game's ex-gangster hero, the Getaway 2 will have 12 new episodic missions all set in London, and several new modes of gameplay to try out. You'll be able to hijack buses to take tours round the city, and even travel massive distances to run up huge fares for gullible punters in Black Cab mode. But the game's core will remain the shooting and driving action that entertained and infuriated gamers in equal measure last year. Given the original's flaws, all we're really hoping for is smoother gameplay.

Out → SEPTEMBER



X-FILES: RESIST OR SERVE

Featuring both Mulder and Scully in central roles, *Resist or Serve* is a survival horror game devised by screenwriters recently made redundant from the defunct TV show. Closing the book on this particular case is a matter of performing autopsies, solving simple clues and shooting zombies, in an adventure that claims to be darker and gorier than the television show ever got a chance to be. Albeit with as much wall-eyed theorising and laughable conspiracy theories. Still fumbling around in the dark for reference points? Well, start from *Silent Hill* and walk northwards until you get to Raccoon City. *Resist or Serve* is opposite the burning church. You know, the one with the barking vicar.

Out → MAY



THE MOVIES

Pete 'Black & White' Molyneux's new game has you micro-managing a film studio. The video nasties: dealing with egotistical actors and actresses, strikes by unions, the changing taste of a mercurial public and the demands of wrapping everything on time and under budget. The golden globes: once you've made your movie you'll be able to see the scenes you've created, and possibly even showcase them online, if they can manage the technology. Mind you, if *The Movies* makes its own rough release date, we'll be surprised. These sort of wildly ambitious titles seem to slip down our schedules faster than the proverbial swarfega-covered salmon down a steep ski slope.

Out → JUNE



TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

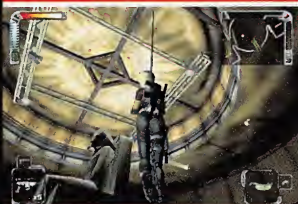
They're already playing this one over in America. Mute the TV and you can almost hear the distinctive whoop of the lesser-spotted happy yank. But not quite. Because so far the reviews of this cel-shaded brawler have been lukewarm, but then what do Americans know about anything? Apart from how to bomb foreign countries into the ground to ensure a cheap supply of petrol.

Out → FEBRUARY



THE BEST OF THE REST

LIGHT ARTILLERY IN THE WAR AGAINST BOREDOM



ROGUE OPS: Nikki Connors is the vengeance driven anti-terrorist pro at the centre of this sneak 'em up, which offers gameplay in the *Splinter Cell* mold minus the crippling difficulty factor. It's more shooting, less stealth with this one.
Out → FEBRUARY

PARAPPA THE RAPPER 3: Having contracted Difficult Second Album syndrome, Parappa is keen to get his career upright again with his third solo release. Part two was too easy, so look for a serious long-term challenge this time.
Out → MAY

THE PUNISHER: Marvel's darkest superhero is the focus of this all-action game, in which you must avenge the murder of your loved ones by beating the hell out of street scum. As violent as you like.
Out → MAY

FIFA 2005: Expect more gimmicks, more stats, more teams and more options you probably won't use in the inevitable and unnecessary update to *FIFA 2004*. And probably a new photo on the cover, too.
Out → OCTOBER

FLIPNIC: It's pinball, but at least *Flipnic* contains 50 levels over five different environments. The ball will travel in three dimensions over madly unrealistic locations, plus four-player minigames. Like, wow.
Out → FEBRUARY

MX UNLEASHED: Race your motorbike against trains and helicopters – and even other bikes! – over terrain that extends for virtual miles through realistic worlds.
Out → FEBRUARY

PROJECT ZERO 2: *Project Zero 2* is a concerted attempt to further derange the survival horror genre. You play a young girl with a strong sixth sense and a nasty twin sister.
Out → APRIL

PITFALL HARRY: Even though we despised the original *Pitfall* game – the archetype of the boresome jumping marathon – we still hope that Harry pulls through.
Out → FEBRUARY

TRIVIAL PURSUIT UNHINGED: Question: What is the only thing in the entire world more depressing than playing a board game on your own? Answer: wrapping your dead mum in Coles bags and dumping her in a skip.
Out → MARCH



CONAN: THE DARK AXE

The original action hero is set to appear in this adventure set after the first *Conan* movie. We've been promised 'intense light and shadow effects', which'll surely be nice, but it's the intense axe-based limb-removal effects we're after. Arnold Schwarzenegger's likeness has been ditched in favour of a more traditional (ahem, cheaper) look.
Out → MARCH



AREA 51

A shooter with a dark plot based in the titular hangar. Expect beast-thrills courtesy of the design of Stan Winston, who's made creatures on films like *Aliens* and *Predator*. Latex-based shocks and plenty of green blood to splatter, then. Although we don't think much of his stereotypical grey alien here. Maybe he was just warming up.
Out → JUNE

RICHARD BURNS RALLY

The makers of *Richard Burns Rally* claim they've outdone the *Colin McRae* games in terms of realism, with every working part of the car simulated for authenticity and unsurpassed course detail. We'll believe it when we see it, but it's certainly looking impressive right now,

with all manner of 'photorealistic' tracks and smart graphical effects. The ironic thing is that with Burns out next year recovering from a brain op, it looks like McRae will be taking his place at Subaru. Funny how these things work out.
Out → JUNE



DRIVING FORCE Can Rich B really topple Colin McRae?



BANG FOR YOUR BUCK The game's explosion-heavy too.



DEADFELLAS Cause gangsta death, Miami police style.





BAD BOYS II

Switching between both *Bad Boys* — those being Mike Lowrey (the Fresh Prince of Bel Air) and Marcus Burnett (his mate, the one who got arrested for carrying a firearm) — the idea here is to plough a big fat furrow through the middle of the overgrown criminal underworld of Miami, just like in the explode-acious recent film. The game is divided into three distinct sections: Explore mode, in which you search for clues; Action mode, in which you shoot people in the hope that they'll emit a red, clue-based fluid; and Sniper mode, in which you attempt to shoot clues from the heads of bad men with beards and \$50,000-a-day coke habits. PSW says: might be worth a snoot if you're into brainless action games. Which we are.

Out → MARCH



HOT STUFF Things just explode in Miami. They do.



THE NEXT GRAND THEFT AUTO

We're due one more *Grand Theft Auto* title on PlayStation2 before the twisted virtuosos at Rockstar North release *Grand Theft Auto 4* proper for PlayStation3. Still no solid news about where or when the PS2 game's likely to be set, but the California-styled San Andreas and the disco-era 70s are both possible. Whatever they do, it'll take a lot to upset the franchise that's redefined gaming over the last two years. A random wish list: drug dealing, pimping, more side missions, platform soles.

Out → NOVEMBER



FUGITIVE HUNTER

Fugitive Hunter is game with all the tact of second-hand coffin salesman. A national press backlash is somewhat inevitable. In the game you play a former US Navy Seal who takes it upon himself to track down Osama bin Laden — well, Abdullah bin Yasin. Any similarity with any person living or dead is entirely intentional.

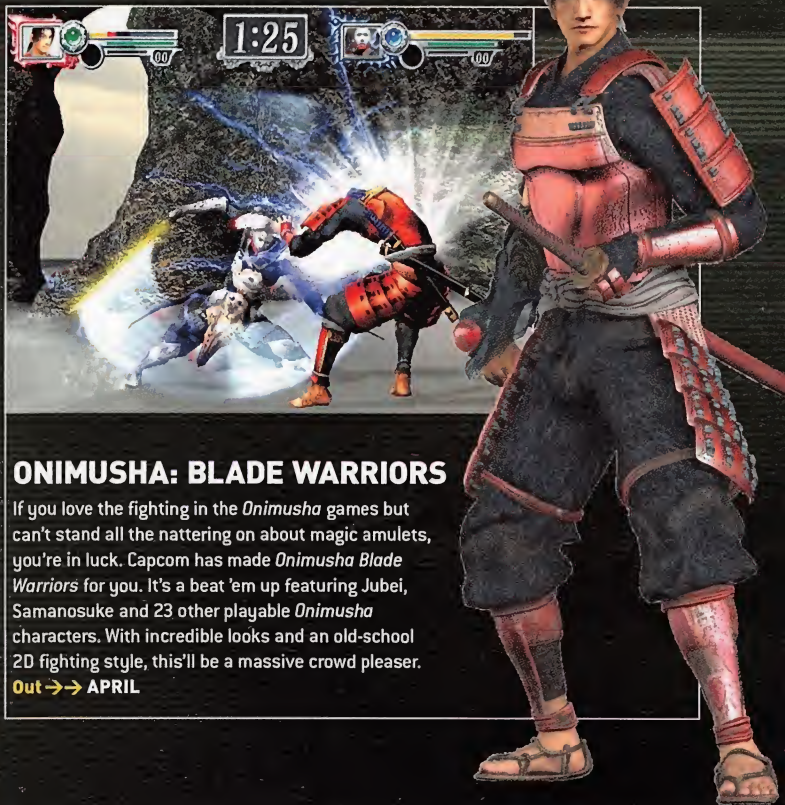
Out → APRIL



CALL OF DUTY: FINEST HOUR

This immersive first-person shooter drags you through the terrors of World War II once again. It's almost as if it's been made by people who'd previously created the *Medal Of Honor* series... hang about... it was... 28 of them in fact! That's why we reckon *Call of Duty* could turn out to be one of 2004's unexpected military highlights.

Out → JULY



ONIMUSHA: BLADE WARRIORS

If you love the fighting in the *Onimusha* games but can't stand all the nattering on about magic amulets, you're in luck. Capcom has made *Onimusha Blade Warriors* for you. It's a beat 'em up featuring Jubei, Samanosuke and 23 other playable *Onimusha* characters. With incredible looks and an old-school 2D fighting style, this'll be a massive crowd pleaser.

Out → APRIL

THE BEST OF THE REST

BOMBS DROPPING INTO YOUR LIVING ROOM IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS



SPAWN: ARMAGEDDON:

Armageddon, as the name suggests, focuses on the final battle between the armies of Heaven and Hell. This is the entire 99 comic run of the original *Spawn* serial squeezed into one PS2 game.

OUT → MARCH

COLD WINTER: *Cold Winter* has you playing a disgraced MI6 agent attempting to lift the veil on the shady factions soiling his 100% cotton name. We should have much more next issue.

OUT → AUGUST

RISK: GLOBAL DOMINATION:

Military board-based strategy for armchair generals who take their gaming with a pinch of basic geo-politics [table for one, sir?]. We've all seen the *Seinfeld* episode. Now, take it online.

OUT → MARCH

SING: Sony's reply to the recent spate of mumbling karaoke games is the immaculately throaty *Sing*, "the microphone craze taken to the next level". Whatever.

OUT → TBA

MANX TT: If you're daft, you'll be needing our upcoming preview to receive a better understanding of what to expect from *Manx TT*. Here's a hint: motorbikes. And another: corners.

OUT → APRIL

GOBLIN COMMANDER: UNLEASH THE HORDE:

With a name that could consign us to a life of celibacy by association alone, *Goblin Commander* has work to do if it's to embed itself in the cleft of the PSW bosom.

OUT → MARCH

ASTERIX AND OBELISK XXL:

Apparently you'll be controlling both characters simultaneously for this one. Oh, and you'll also be expected to battle upwards of 70 Romans at the same time. Yeah, right.

OUT → TBA

GROOVE RIDER: If you're assuming that *Groove Rider* is an insanely fast futuristic racer in the *WipeOut* mould, you'd be dead wrong. It's actually a music generator. Fascinating.

OUT → MARCH

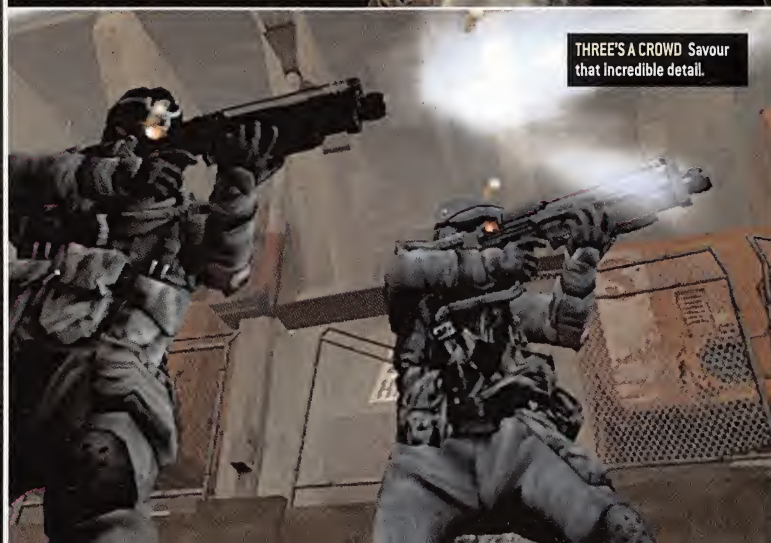
CONFLICT: VIETNAM: The third game in the *Conflict* series is based around the Vietnam conflict and is shaping up to be a serious challenger to the tasty *SOCOM II*. Huge PSW exclusive coming your way very soon, ma'am.

OUT → TBA

KILLZONE

We play it in our heads all the time already. In our heads it's an intense shooter with terrifyingly gorgeous visuals, unique group combat and shockingly real battlefield scenarios, all set in a dark near future. Could be that's what it's like in real life. But all you really need to know is that *Killzone* will set new standards for war-based gaming. PSW has bagged the exclusive first play and footage of this incredible game – all will be revealed very soon.

Out → JUNE



DRIFT RACER: KAIDO BATTLE

Kaido is the Japanese word for 'huge twisty mountain roads'. And the Drift bit means you'll be bombing round those roads in one of 120 licensed vehicles, power-sliding round tracks like Colin McRae on amphetamines. Forget crashing into walls. If you mess up here, you'll find yourself on a hasty date with Mr 2,000 Feet Below. We've always loved wrenching cars round the mountain stages of games like *WRC3* and *Gran Turismo*, so this should go down a treat.

Out → → APRIL



I-NINJA

We're actually getting quite excited about Sony's *I-Ninja*. See, the little chappie's a proper action hero with varied skills such as wall-running, rail-grinding and martial arts. Like someone gave *Sonic the Hedgehog* a set of knives and a bandana.

Out → → MARCH



PRIDE GP 2003

Fans of the blood-and-guts grappling series will be over the moon to see the return of their favourite real life beat 'em up stars. Capcom now has the licence, which should mean that last year's rather limp effort is replaced by a fiery brawler.

Out → → APRIL



CY-GIRLS

You'll get to control one of two mental manga babes in this Japanese action title. One's skilled in weapons, the other in martial arts, making for intense combat either way you gawp at it as you globe-trot your way through South America, the Far East and eventually off into virtual reality. The girls can even run off walls, further proof that trendy *Prince of Persia*-style wall-running is this year's cel shading. Which was last year's free roaming. Or was that the year before? Whatever. At least it's not another bloody stealth game. And for that we should all be very thankful.

Out → → MARCH



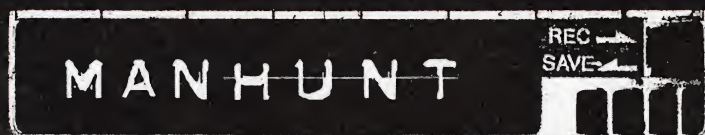
THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS

To celebrate the tenth anniversary of Tim Burton's typically bizarre ghouls-meets-Yule feature (has it really been that long?), Capcom is making an action game based on what happened after Jack Skellington tried to take over Christmas by replacing festive stuff such as Santa Claus with all things Halloween. Visually at least, it's looking the equal of the classic stop-motion animated film in every way, and Jack even has a new specially designed weapon for the game in the form of his spectral snort-like Rubber Soul. There'll be a lot less singing and dancing though. Which is probably for the best. Or not. Say if you were a dancing Coke can. You know, it bends and shit.

Out → → MAY

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TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON: JUNGLE STORM

GAMES ARE FOR THE WEAK. HARD MEN PLAY SIMULATIONS. AND BOY, IS *JUNGLE STORM* EVER A SIMULATION. TOM CLANCY'S WORLD DOMINATION DRAWS EVER CLOSER...

| | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| > TYPE | TACTICAL SHOOTING |
| > PLAYERS | 1-2 |
| > OUT | FEBRUARY |
| > PUBLISHER | UBISOFT |
| > PRICE | \$99.95 |
| > DEVELOPER | UBISOFT |
| > ONLINE | YES |

AT THE TIME OF WRITING, SADDAM HUSSEIN IS in jail, anxiously awaiting the attentions of the brawny cellmate with the lipstick and the facial hair fetish. But to get to him, the US had to seriously mess up a whole country. Because he couldn't be assassinated when he was at the height of his powers. The reason being that apparently, simply sneaking into heavily guarded military bases and taking out the head honcho is pretty much impossible. Turns out that despite what games say, air vents aren't conveniently spy-sized, terrorist leaders don't post the easiest-to-kill enemies on the very outside of the strongholds and the hardest ones in the middle, and natty all-in-one rubber suits don't make you invisible.

Jungle Storm knows this. It knows that if you're going to take on the bad boys, somebody's going to get shot and one man is pretty much useless on his own. So you play as one of a squad of six soldiers of an elite military division, intent on securing freedom in Cuba and chasing evildoers into Colombia. The point of *Jungle Storm* is that it's meant to be real. You can generally take out an enemy with a single shot.

But then unlike most games, you can be dispatched with a single round too. That's right, *Jungle Storm* is home of the now legendary 'one shot, one kill' form of gameplay. And it forces you to play in a totally different way to any other PS2 game. Get into it and you'll be hooked in a whole new way. If you're not, you might as well be sticking your index fingers repeatedly in your eyes for all the fun you'll have.

No longer can you charge around until you see the enemy and then shoot them. By the time you've heard their first shots, you'll probably be

twitching in a pool of rapidly spreading blood. Every life ends in a frantic scramble for weapons — whoever gets to the trigger first gets to keep his brains inside his head. It's like a permanent *High Noon*, with every enemy a sharpshooting cowboy who'll kill you faster than you can say, 'Holy shit, where did he come from?'

STEALTH OF NATIONS

The previous *Ghost Recon* game on PS2 was a bit of a disaster, but many of its faults have been sorted out for this sequel. For instance, it's now





very easy to point your men in the right direction simply by aiming your target at a location and setting down a red mark for your team to reach. And you can issue an absolute shedload of voice commands if you plug in a USB headset, which is great for people who, uh, like speaking instead of pressing buttons. And the desert and industrial locations of the first game have been largely replaced with a collection of green pointy things we can only describe as an attempt at jungle foliage. At least they're not simply window displays around a single path like the jungle growth in *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun*.

The main thing about the jungle setting is the stealth factor. Most tactical stealth games only give you a vague illusion of being able to hide. You know the score. Enemies who can't hear explosions from next door. Guards who seem to



GET HIM IN THE LEG And he'll go down cursing your luck.

"WHOEVER GETS TO THE TRIGGER FIRST GETS TO KEEP HIS BRAINS INSIDE HIS HEAD. IT'S LIKE A PERMANENT *HIGH NOON*"

be wearing blinkers that cut off all their peripheral vision. Gameplay shortcuts that let you shoot one enemy while the terrorist next to him stands by oblivious, scratching his arse and whistling. To be fair, *Jungle Storm*'s sister games *Splinter Cell* and *Rainbow Six 3* use these tricks less than most. But *Jungle Storm* doesn't entertain any of this stuff – not even for a second. The rule is pretty simple. If you can see an enemy, he can see you. If you're lying down, you might get away with it. If you make any move though, it increases your visibility. Even when you can't see them, they can see you. An eye icon appears in the corner of the screen when you're visible so at least you know when you're exposed. But you'll still be shot just when you least expect it, making it extremely unlikely you'll make it through a mission with all six squad members in one piece.

The only thing between you and absolute certain death is your threat meter. Sadly, it's not a radar that points out every enemy for you. No such luck. It's the glowing frisbee that lives at the bottom of the screen and tells you the vague direction and distance of danger. It means you

ENEMY? WHAT ENEMY?

WE SUBJECT *JUNGLE STORM* TO OUR EXHAUSTIVE 'CAN YOU SEE HIM?' TEST. IT FAILS.



> ENEMY IN MAXIMO 2. AH, THERE HE IS.



> ENEMY IN JUNGLE STORM. UH, WHERE?

Most games, like *Maximo vs. Army of Zin* here, signpost their villains. They urge your eyes towards monsters and enemies with all sorts of flashy cut-scenes, glowing red eyes, dramatic entrances and the like. But in *Jungle Storm*, the buggers are genuinely hidden. You can easily scan the horizon and completely miss two or three fighters within 50 feet of your oh-so-breakable skull. You'll find yourself wishing the game was in widescreen, to expand your field of view. To make everything that much tougher, all vegetation sways in the breeze so you can't even be sure that flash of movement you just saw was a guard and not a gourd. Bah.

always know when you're completely safe, but when you're in trouble it recedes into regions of uselessness normally associated with bike-riding fish carrying chocolate teapots. Conversations with the threat meter go something like this: "Enemies coming up." "Shit! Where?" "Dunno." "Not even vaguely?" "Kind of over there. Or over there, actually. Maybe behind you now. Oh, you've gone and got yourself shot!" Infuriating as it can be, it's actually a great compromise between knowing too much and getting killed without any warning at all.

As for us, we have a confession to make. Due to the extreme toughness and authenticity of *Jungle Storm*, we started to think about it as if it was real. We've never done that before, not with *Gran Turismo 3*, not with *Metal Gear Solid 2*, not with anything. While *Jungle Storm* isn't exactly lifelike in a lot of ways, the very fact that there's no real reason you should win rather than the enemy is bracingly intense. You start thinking of the made-up, computer-controlled enemies as a real fighting force, because you're forced to use honest to God real tactics against them. Take the favourite trick of running straight at an



BAD PLACE TO BE Immobilised tanks can still shoot at you.



TERROR SCENE Save the fleeing hostage or it's game over.

enemy while shooting, in the hope that they'll be dead by the time you reach them. We've all done it, even in the fastest-paced shooters. Not here, though. Here, all you'll be doing is presenting a bigger and bigger target to the enemy, who'll take his time to plug you with one perfect shot.

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

It all adds up to the fact that you're going to have to plan your kills properly. Waiting a few seconds can make all the difference between life and death, and you'll want to keep manoeuvring your

Bravo team into a secondary position so it's not just you taking the heat. Instead of dashing through danger zones in the hope you'll make it through, you'll have to get down on the ground and crawl over every inch, keeping an eye out for snipers all the way. Add hostages into this heady mix, and you've got a whole new dimension of nail-biting tension. Since the hostages follow you around, you have the added burden of making sure these innocents don't get caught in the middle of the inevitable firefights. Sure, you can try and send them off with your Bravo team, but can you really trust those ham-fisted bastards to keep them alive when you're not in control? It makes two-player split-screen co-operation all the more enticing when you realise that although your men may be crack shots, when it comes to initiative they make Isaac Newton look like Toni Pearen.

Consequently, every kill somehow feels more real. Take out a troublesome sniper with a headshot, and you'll be pumping your fist in the air like Rocky and howling to the moon. Then you'll feel a bit guilty. After all, that terrorist may have had a virtual wife and kids somewhere in your PlayStation2's memory. Who are you to judge whether he should live or die? You shed a quiet tear, before telling yourself it's all in the cause of freedom. With a manly sniff, you continue your crusade and promptly blow his friend's head off.

NET FORCE

Get really into *Ghost Recon* and you'll want to play with a mate in that superior co-operative mode, with plenty of chances to work together to form ass-kicking strategies. And even if the single-player mode bores you to death, you still might have a lot to shout about if you venture online. Rather than degenerating into a free-for-all shooting party, the exacting nature of *Ghost Recon* means you're more likely to spend time planning tactics with team members than going on a one-man killing spree. It's one of the high points of *Jungle Storm*, and it even makes the whole title worth buying.

And then there's the visuals. We take back what we've previously said about upcoming rival *SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs* looking less than great. Because we've now seen the true meaning of



LET ME KILL THEM Co-operative mode is great for two players, as long as they're dedicated.



GUARD POST Take out tache-futures to reach the hostage.

UP CLOSE AND TACTICAL

YOU'LL GET NOWHERE UNLESS YOU PLAN YOUR ROUTES. HERE'S HOW A SINGLE OBJECTIVE PLAYS OUT.

1 Separate your two teams and head off into the jungle. Watch out for lone guards and use cover for safety.

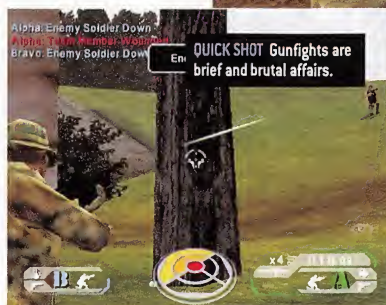
2 Bravo team fight their way past the snipers to the enemy camp, via a different route. It's the classic pincer movement.

3 You lead Alpha team around the back way, and pick off individual fighters. Soon the whole camp's up in arms. Uh-oh.

4 Bravo team arrive just in time to reinforce your efforts. Death ensues, but thanks to planning, it's not yours.



“DEAD BODIES LIE WHERE THEY FALL INSTEAD OF EERILY VANISHING, LITTERING THE FLOOR LIKE THE LEAVES OF HELL”



crap-looking graphics. Joyfully, gleefully rubbish graphics, in fact. Plants that look like green painted cardboard boxes. Hills made of triangles and characters that look needlessly bland. The simple truth is that *Jungle Storm* was made for PCs, with their infinitely large brains. Our PS2, puffing and wheezing in its early middle age, isn't up to drawing huge jungles over infinite distances. Other games have got around this by being clever with how much you can see on screen at any one time, but this didn't occur to *Jungle Storm*. So you can roam over literally

miles of unique terrain, finding brave and unthought-of strategies to attack enemies and going miles out of your way to avoid danger – as long as you don't mind that everything looks like it was made by God when he was a toddler and hadn't got this whole world creation thing down just yet. If it makes you feel any better, the Xbox version looked equally rubbish.

It's not all bad news on the looks front, though. Trees wave nicely in the breeze. Bodies lie dead where they fall instead of eerily vanishing, meaning that during intense shootouts they can litter the floor like the leaves of Hell. Sunsets are pretty, like only games can make them. But overall, it's a massive explosion of visual nastiness.

STEALTH FETISHISTS ONLY

Jungle Storm is going to polarise opinion. Strategists may fall for it, action fans may not. The main contender for *Jungle Storm*'s glory is *SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs*, and while the two titles share a hell of a lot of superficial similarities, they're different beasts at heart. At the end of the day *SOCOM II* is 'only' a game,



BODY BAGS And you will know *Jungle Storm* by the trail of dead.

giving you the feeling of being in control of a combat unit without bothering you too much about the specifics. *Jungle Storm* has pretensions to being an accurate simulation of small-scale combat. Which is why it's not quite as good. But it's got that aura of wild-eyed realism that was so sorely lacking in, say, the recent *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun*. At the end of the day, we like the plain Jane sexiness of *Jungle Storm*. It may not have the looks, but it's got the guts to deliver the sort of gameplay depth that most games can only dream of. Buy it if you dare. Just don't expect a pretty face, that's all. You know what they say about not looking at the mantelpiece when you're poking the fire...
/ JOFF BROWN

PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS

- > Solid tactical action
- > Unparalleled realism
- > Deep internet play
- > Wicked co-op mode

> DOWNERS

- > Yukky looks
- > Dodgy AI
- > Repetitive missions
- > Can get stodgy

GRAPHICS > We deserve much better than this muck **4**

SOUNDS > Real-sounding voices, slightly tinny guns **7**

GAMEPLAY > With killer online play, we're loving it **8**

OVERALL SCORE

Proper combat simulation for avid gamers, and fantastic for detailed and complex online fighting. Shame it looks like something the cat threw up, though. Casual gamers steer well clear.

7



DESTRUCTION DERBY ARENAS

WAR IN CARS GOES ONLINE, IN THIS NETWORK-FRIENDLY UPDATE TO ONE OF PLAYSTATION'S MOST LEGENDARY NAMES.



| | |
|-------------|-----------|
| > TYPE | RACING |
| > PLAYERS | 1-MULTI |
| > OUT | NOW |
| > PUBLISHER | SONY |
| > PRICE | \$99.95 |
| > DEVELOPER | STUDIO 33 |
| > ONLINE | YES |

YOU JUST DRIVE CARS AROUND AND SMASH stuff up. That's it. It's you crashing into other cars. Review over. If you're looking for hidden depths, look away now. This is shallower than half a litre of water spread out to coat the entire surface of the Moon. There's you, in a car, with some other cars, all sort of bumping into each other a bit. If you're easily impressed, like, say,

if you've only just bought a PS2 and this is the first video game thing you've ever seen, you might find this fun. But even then we suspect you'd quickly wonder, after 20 minutes of endless car-mashing, why everyone told you to get a PS2 in the first place.

Vague sexual thrusts in the direction of excitement have been made by the addition of a new Championship mode, which consists of race-based driving around four differing courses. But are you racing to finish first, score the most points or remain unscathed? It doesn't really matter. It's just you, in a car, with some other cars, all sort of bumping into each other a bit. The Championship is a four-race battle to, er, we're not sure. Either score the most points or finish first, but it really doesn't matter. Just sort of spaz around for a while and come in mid-field and you progress to the next round anyway, which is nice and friendly of it, but hardly helps an already simple game to last longer.

MODES OF DESTRUCTION

Destruction Derby Arenas comes with three other game modes – two offline and one for those of you who are fully hooked up – all of which are just you, in a car, with some other cars, all sort of

bumping into each other a bit. In a further stroke of BBC *Watchdog*-baiting consumer rip-off scandal, the second Wrecking Racing mode is just the individual Championship races available on their own. That's hardly deserving of an entire Mode to itself. It should be a sub-mode at best. It should be a minor addition, not a headline – your sign that the already wafer-thin content of *Destruction Derby Arenas* is getting spread that little bit thinner still.

The third single-player option is the Destruction Bowl, a more traditional *DD*-style smash up. There's you, in a car, with some other cars, all sort of bumping into each other a bit,



MINDLESS, MOI?

YOU ONLY DO TWO THINGS IN *DESTRUCTION DERBY*. AND YOU DO THEM AGAIN, AND AGAIN, AND AGAIN, AND AGAIN UNTIL YOU DIE.



DRIVE AROUND

Well, here we are, driving around in one of the new 'driving around'-themed levels. There are power-ups, tyre grip enhancers and weapons to collect, plus nitros for extra speed. We can measure your excitement already.



SMASH STUFF UP

Oh look, we've crashed into someone – the other thing you do in *Destruction Derby*. Crashes don't feel right, with your paper-light car flapping about like a crisp packet stuck in hurricane Betty. How very disturbing.



DRIVE AROUND SOME MORE

Fifteen minutes into our game and already bored with smashing stuff up, we opt to enjoy a little more of the driving around. With cars that slide and control as well as 1950s prams, this ain't much fun either. Did I get a receipt?



SMASH OTHER THINGS

Five minutes later and we seek those 'hidden depths' that may be located within the smash-based play. After metaphorically banging our heads (the car) against a wall (the other cars) we realise there are no depths and start to cry.



WAIT FOR IT TO END

We're only waiting for it to end because we're polite. If we'd spent our own money on it we'd be switching it off in a sulk and marching down the shops to blag a refund or swap it for something else. Like *Colin McRae 04*.



UP AND UNDER The light-weight vehicles are actually made of papier-mâché.



FINAL COUNTDOWN Now you can go and have some fun.



RED ALERT The cars aren't real. That exhaust looks silly too.

only this time in a big stadium so there's even less skill to it. Really, honestly, you would be better off just hitting your head into your TV screen. So is it any better in the online game? No. It's still just you, in a car, with some other cars, all sort of bumping into each other a bit, only this time with the inconvenience of logging into the network and playing against idiots.

COLOUR ME BAD

Rather than use the full power of PS2 to make a more realistic-looking version, *DD Arenas* has gone all pastel on us. It's taken the cartoony, colourful turn, opting for the look of a Midway



DEATH AND DESTRUCTION Killing a car is sadistically quite fun.

"VAGUE SEXUAL THRUSTS IN THE DIRECTION OF EXCITEMENT HAVE BEEN MADE BY THE ADDITION OF A NEW CHAMPIONSHIP MODE."

arcade machine from 1992. Your car flashes "on and off" when it's too damaged to carry on. That's not good, things never flash on and off in real life, which just makes the game look tatty. If you're flipped upside-down in a collision your motor starts flashing, then restarts the right way up.

And you'll be on your roof flashing quite a lot, thanks to the lightness of the cars. We understand that it's essential to have them fly around a little for dramatic effect, but we found ourselves skidding, sliding, flipping and generally losing control way too often. The solid feel isn't there, it's more like wafting along in cardboard go-karts rather than evil speed/death machines. The camera doesn't help it look great or play well either. Hit someone in a full-face fashion and, presumably to make you more excited, the shot flicks around quickly and arbitrarily, disorientating you and possibly triggering epileptic fits in sensitive types.

So. There's not enough in it, and what there is

is short, simple, as repetitive as a boot stamping on a human face – forever – and only just beats the look of the PSone games which, if our memory serves us correctly, came out back in 1979. The first two PSone games were great but, tellingly, the original game makers are now at work on the brilliant *Driver 3*. Kids might find it enjoyable – which is handy, seeing as any grown-up will find it simple, dull, awkward and should be very embarrassed to be seen playing something so dumb. Sony, what's going on?

/ GARY CUTLACK

PSW VERDICT

UPPERS

- It works online... just
- I looks OK... just
- You can enjoy it... just
- If you rent it

DOWNERS

- Lack of race modes
- Flimsy cars
- Duff action camera shots
- Poor animation

GRAPHICS -> Hardly the polish we demand of PS2 nowadays **6**

SOUNDS -> Shouting commentary and music boxes ticked **6**

GAMEPLAY -> Four game modes, all short one-trick ponies **5**

OVERALL SCORE

Destruction Derby is as American as you can get. Loud, dumb and simple. You'll see everything it has to give within ten minutes. A great shame, and an injustice on the name.

5



THE SIMS BUSTIN' OUT

WORK HARD AND PLAY EVEN HARDER IS THE MOTTO AS THE SIMS LEAVES THE 'BURBS BEHIND FOR A NEW LIFE OF PARTIES, CLUBS AND GANGSTERS.



| | |
|-------------|----------|
| > TYPE | STRATEGY |
| > PLAYERS | 1-2 |
| > OUT | NOW |
| > PUBLISHER | EA |
| > PRICE | \$99.95 |
| > DEVELOPER | MAXIS |
| > ONLINE | YES |

BRETT LEE AN AUSTRALIAN REGULAR VIN
Diesel an A-list action star. *The Sims* a runaway success. Phenomena that nobody is able to explain. But unlike expensive, wicket-less ratboy Lee and charisma-free Diesel, there's something appealing about *The Sims*. We just can't quite put our finger on it...

Perhaps it's the freedom to take the game at your own pace, forgoing the challenges in favour of treating your Sim like it's a Tamagotchi. Or maybe it's the strange humour, typified by the opening sequence in which you're about to score in a nightclub only for your mother to rudely awaken you from a dream. Whatever the reason we can see why it's so easy to get hooked.

Though *Bustin' Out* is nowhere near as fussy as the original game, it's remarkable how quickly your Sim gets bogged down in the minutiae of day-to-day life when all you really want to do is go on the pull. Instead you're constantly monitoring their sleep, hunger, cleanliness, bladder level and so on so they don't nod off, starve, stink or wet themselves in front of other characters. Forget or neglect to perform minor

actions (easy to do as you assume some are automatic) and your Sim isn't too chuffed.

MEAT AND GREET

For example, eating is a painstaking process that involves preparing the food, carrying it to the table, eating, clearing the plate from the table and putting it in the dishwasher. But the dishwasher is broken in your first home so, unless you repair it pronto, you spend almost an hour of game time mopping up water. That's not fun. Characters take

far too long to move into their designated positions and perform these kinds of actions, although thankfully you can speed up time.

But these are the fundamental flaws of the original game and if you're already considering buying *Bustin' Out* you probably just want to know what the new stuff is like. Well, it's good news. Commendably it tries to push the more fun aspects of *The Sims*, namely being sociable and getting out and about. Meeting as many people as possible helps achieve the ultimate goal of living a luxurious lifestyle, though you can't just stick your tongue down anyone's throat and not expect a slap. Other Sims must be tactfully won over, which you can only do by holding conversations and watching the speech icons above their heads for clues about their views and feelings. There's a moral in there somewhere...

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

A series of challenges revolve around earning promotions. By making your Sim content and popular before heading to work, he or she can move up the career ladder in their chosen





PLAYING GOD

IT'S NOW EVEN EASIER TO CREATE YOUR OWN SIM



1

Begin by selecting your gender, build and star sign, which govern your traits. In turn, these form your personality and character.



2

It's easier to sort out your bottom half first. Scraggy jeans and trainers look about right for a video game journalist.



3

Your Sim starts off a bit camp. Let's begin by getting rid of those elfin, feminine features and that bright red jumper.



4

He's beginning to take shape. Just a few tweaks needed to the nose, mouth, eye colour, eyebrows and hairstyle.



5

Our Sim is finally complete. Completing the challenges in the main *Bustin' Out* mode unlocks even more customisation options.



TOUCHY-FEELY The signs are good so get in there and flirt.



BRUSH OFF Body language and icons indicate their feelings.

"YOU CAN'T JUST STICK YOUR TONGUE DOWN ANYONE'S THROAT AND NOT EXPECT A SLAP. SIMS MUST BE TACTFULLY WON OVER."

profession. Extra skills, areas on the map, modes of transport and so on are unlocked as goals are ticked off, with these new items usually relating to how you go about completing the next set of challenges. This does mean that finishing *Bustin' Out* is more a case of when than if, but it's the getting there, of course, that counts. There's even a story, albeit a flimsy one, about retrieving your possessions from a character called Malcolm Landgrabb, who steals your best stuff at various points in the game.

Most importantly, once you do complete the game there are plenty of reasons to go back for more. The branching career paths unlock tons of extra stuff related to your job, while the different personality traits you can give your Sim at the improved customisation screen also affect how your job pans out. For instance, a more active Sim would suit a career as an athlete, though if your traits don't match your career the game isn't harsh enough to force you down a cul-de-sac from which you can't win. PS2 also gets an exclusive online Multiplayer mode for two players, which allows you to invite another Sim

over to your town to improve skills together and trade everything that you've unlocked up to that point. It's a canny way of cheating and makes the skill-building process that bit less mundane.

So *The Sims* now feels like a proper console game in its own right instead of a half-hearted attempt to capitalise on its popularity over in PC land. More goals, more stuff to unlock, and less mooching around for ages with little reward makes it possible to see why so many people spend more time improving their Sim's social life than their own. If you're not already a fan then this won't convert you, but devotees are in for a very merry Xmas.

/ JONATHAN TODD

PS2 VERDICT

| UPPERS | | DOWNERS | |
|--|--|-------------------------|--|
| ➤ Improved Sim customisation | | Still too fussy | |
| ➤ Branching career paths | | Short main game | |
| ➤ Replay value | | Often dull | |
| ➤ Pretty addictive | | ➤ Hasn't really changed | |
| GRAPHICS ➤ Bright, colourful and detailed | | 7 | |
| SOUNDS ➤ Catchy music and amusing Sim-speak | | 8 | |
| GAMEPLAY ➤ Doesn't really alter the basic formula | | 7 | |
| OVERALL SCORE | | | |
| Loads to do and plenty of replay value make up for the feeling that this is <i>The Sims: Repackaged</i> . If only the game took more control over the tedious tasks of eating, sleeping and washing. | | | |



BLOW OUT Weapons pack a huge punch. Take that, SkyNet!



DOMINO EFFECT Terminators explode and take others down.



GROUND IT Future Killer Flyers patrol the skies.



GREEN MEANY Some parts of its body are immune.



WEAPONS DETAIL Ammo always runs out, so pick up SkyNet's.



YELLOW BELLY Why does our future leader suffer from jaundice?

TERMINATOR 3: RISE OF THE MACHINES

JUDGEMENT DAY IS NIGH AND IT'S YOUR JOB TO STOP SKYNET'S ARMY OF MACHINES. TERMINATION MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE BETTER OPTION, ACTUALLY.



| | |
|-------------|-----------|
| > TYPE | SHOOTING |
| > PLAYERS | 1 |
| > OUT | NOW |
| > PUBLISHER | ATARI |
| > PRICE | \$99.95 |
| > DEVELOPER | BLACK BOX |
| > ONLINE | NO |

IF ARNIE'S POLITICAL PROWESS MATCHES HIS judgement of a quality game, then California is in big trouble. This is the first time the would-be president has given the go-ahead for his voice and likeness to be used in a video game so, beyond another desperate plug for the below-par film, he must have seen something special in *Rise of the Machines* that we mere mortals obviously missed.

For even if this game had come out five years ago on PSone, it'd still only be deemed good, rather than great. The biggest let-down is the graphics. They're rubbish. The original movie's vision of the future still holds up almost 20 years later, but here it's reduced to bland, blurry environments and a plodding army of awkwardly animated Terminators. That's not acceptable when you're messing with one of the biggest movie franchises of all time. What with this, *Crouching Tiger*, *Hidden Dragon* and *Mission: Impossible*, we've had about as much as we can take of these average movie cash-ins.

It's a pity really because the well-known *Terminator* mythology should be rich pickings for

a first-person shooter. You already know and care for these characters, even Clare Danes' flimsy Kate Brewster and Nick Stahl's lifeless John Connor who here direct the reprogrammed Arnhold's mission objectives off-screen. Locations from the film are shrewdly mixed with new areas so as to give the impression you're seeing exclusive footage or fleshed out parts of the story, though Arnie's contribution is limited to a handful of short cut-scenes and a few heavily repeated lines as you collect health and weapon

pick-ups. At the end of missions, movie clips, stills, concept art and so on are unlocked, plus there's a making-of documentary and behind-the-scenes guff. Most of this stuff is available as extras on the movie DVD anyway, so *Terminator* completists shouldn't feel like they're missing out if they wisely steer clear of this game.

ARNIE BARNEY

Missions are pretty straightforward even for a shoot 'em up. More often than not, they involve



COP THIS Under John Connor's orders you can't kill any police.



HELL FOR LEATHER The T-X can turn her hands into weapons.



HELPING HAND At various points you fight with Tech Com soldiers.



SCENE IT BEFORE Bits from the film are mixed with new locations.



ROVER AND OUT Destroy SkyNet's early prototypes at their lab.

SECONDS OUT

ARNIE'S TERMINATOR GOES TOE-TO-TOE WITH THE INFILTRATOR.



> ROUND ONE...

It's first blow to Arnie as he hoists the Infiltrator by the throat.



> ROUND TWO...

Back comes the Infiltrator with a throw that sends Arnie ten feet.



> ROUND THREE...

The face slam throw strips away any remaining human tissue.



> ROUND FOUR...

With both men beginning to tire, they resort to a spot of grappling.



> ROUND FIVE...

Arnie wins it with a kick to the head that sends the Infiltrator reeling.

clearing a level of every SkyNet Terminator, turret or vehicle, occasionally manning mounted guns to protect weaker human Tech Com special forces. Later you swap sides and play as a pre-programmed Arnie. No matter. The action always harks back to late 80s arcade games in the way enemies line up in huge numbers just begging to be cut down by rapid machine gun fire, the only difference now being that you're free to roam around. And we'll concede that it's quite good fun for a short while. The fact that the machines attack in mass waves with barely an ounce of intelligence between them can't help but generate the teeniest bit of backs-to-the-wall atmosphere that we've seen glimpses of in the films' flashbacks to the future. If that's not a contradiction.

"IF THIS GAME HAD COME OUT FIVE YEARS AGO ON PSONE IT WOULD STILL ONLY BE DEEMED GOOD, RATHER THAN GREAT."

Being a basic Terminator model, your hands can't morph into objects, so new weapons are limited to those left beside destroyed machines. Depending on the colour of their metal bodies, some Terminators only take damage in certain places while others explode so, with ammo in short supply, it's vital you switch to the right gun and use the explosive chain reactions to take out three or four at once.

PLASMA RIFLE IN THE 40-WATT RANGE

The meaty futuristic weaponry is the best thing about *Rise of the Machines* and makes you wonder why the game doesn't have a fully functioning multiplayer online mode. With over 20 weapons and loads of bonus pick-ups, the opportunities for machines vs humans matches are endless. Even a cooperative two-player split-screen mode would have done, but its absence is symptomatic of what seems a rushed and lazy game. The development time would've been better spent adding this kind of content rather than wasting effort on pointless interviews with the cast.

Diversity comes in the form of third-person hand-to-hand combat, first against a random doppelganger and then against the female T-X from the recent movie. Along with a block move, various punches, kicks and throws can be

performed, but the sluggish controls give the impression that these ill-conceived sections were added at the last minute. They feel even more out of place than the fight bits in *Enter the Matrix*. The only nice touches are that the damage affects your appearance and movement, and both Terminators can be slammed into walls.

Perhaps we shouldn't expect better. After all, games based on films are perennially awful, almost as if a clause is written into the licensing deal stating that they have to be. And yet some enjoyment can be gleaned. You might want to see if the ending matches the film's. Or you might want nothing more from a first-person shooter than straightforward, strictly by-the-numbers action anyway. We suspect Arnie won't be back to show his face in a video game after this, though.

/ JONATHAN TODD



LINE UP Man mounted guns to help Tech Com.

PSW VERDICT

| UPPERS | DOWNERS |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Story holds interest Great weapons Occasionally exciting Lots of extras | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PSone graphics Basic blasting Hand-to-hand combat No multiplayer |
| GRAPHICS > Easily the worst thing about the game | 4 |
| SOUNDS > Accurate weapons, cast involvement | 7 |
| GAMEPLAY > No surprises and very straightforward | 5 |
| OVERALL SCORE Shield your poor eyes from the ugliness and it's adequate enough. But honestly people, the Terminator franchise deserves a lot better than this effort. And so do you. | |
| 5 | |



GRIT YOUR TEETH Maximo, in all his diminutive glory.



EYE-OPENER The boss characters are imaginatively designed.



HEADS UP Watch out for the exploding pumpkin.



GO FOR GOLD Get the best armour before boss fights.



FALL APART Combos result in a blur of body parts.



SOCKET TO HIM Dodge its bolts and aim for the eye.

MAXIMO VS. ARMY OF ZIN



THE SMALL FELLA WITH ENOUGH UNDERWEAR TO OPEN A LINGERIE SHOP MAKES A COMEBACK, ALL BUFFED UP AND ARMED TO THE TEETH.

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| > TYPE | ACTION ADVENTURE |
| > PLAYERS | 1 |
| > OUT | FEBRUARY |
| > PUBLISHER | CAPCOM |
| > PRICE | \$99.95 |
| > DEVELOPER | CAPCOM |
| > ONLINE | NO |

EVERY SO OFTEN, A GAME SNEAKS PAST ALL the hype and tripe to take you by surprise with its charm and simplicity. *Maximo* was that title. A cracking little game with more than a nod to the ancient classic *Ghosts 'n Goblins* (well, both heroes run around in boxer shorts once they lose their armour), it proved nostalgia does have its place when married with imagination, humour and graphics in three eye-catching dimensions. It's a foursome we wish we could enjoy more often.

The first game's success and surprisingly downbeat, unresolved ending naturally warranted a sequel. This time, the story continues Maximo's (and his alter ego the Grim Reaper's) search for true love Sophia, pitting them against an army of clockwork monsters powered by the souls of the dead. So, yes, the plot doesn't really matter any more than it did before. The big question is: has *Army of Zin* raised its game and improved upon the original in every other respect?

Thankfully, it's a yes. The core gameplay is sensibly redirected from precision platform jumping towards combo-laden combat, a relief for all those expecting their PS2 controllers to make

frequent flying journeys across the room. That's not to say this isn't a platform game at heart anymore. Indeed, almost every puzzle revolves around working out how to reach what initially looks like an inaccessible ledge. Sometimes it's a case of taking the plunge and attempting a huge leap, but more often than not you need to activate other platforms first to create stepping stones. Heck, about a third of the way in the bashing and bounding are evenly balanced as moving platforms and crumbling walkways make

even reaching new areas full of enemies tricky. It's just that now you have to do a hell of a lot of enjoyable fighting before and in between these more frustrating sections.

CUT AND THRUST

Enemies in the early levels can be disposed of using Maximo's basic slash and downward smash thrusts, but in keeping with the game's all-action approach it's not long before more skilful combos are needed. Good timing is vital,



THREE AND EASY Use a whirling spin attack when surrounded.



FEELING GREEN Bore beetles stand no chance against a combo.

HEROES AND VILLAINS | HOW MAXIMO TESTS YOUR MORALS.



GOOD MAXIMO

Two clockwork monsters gang up on a helpless elderly villager, so you plough in to save him.



BAD MAXIMO

You ignore his cries for help and concentrate instead on snaffling up more gold coins.



GOOD MAXIMO

He's a travelling salesman, so as a reward for saving his life you can buy health and weapons.



BAD MAXIMO

While he's being pulped you turn your back on him and use the diversion to make a run for it.



because rather annoyingly, Maximo is vulnerable for a split second after he takes a swing of his axe or sword. Miss an enemy and they land a counter-attack blow every time, and they're also pretty good at surrounding you.

Villagers teach you some of these combo moves provided you get to them before enemies do, thus testing your selflessness and giving the otherwise linear levels a kind of faux freedom. It works pretty well, because as well as learning new combos you're rewarded for saving villagers with secondary weapons, keys to treasure chests, extra armour and, most importantly, gold coins for buying some of the above items from travelling salesmen – provided you rescue the salesmen, too. If you want to just skip through levels as quickly as possible then you can heartlessly ignore the villagers' cries for help, but those who like to get the most out of a game by finding every secret and bonus item will have their work cut out.

GRIM AND BARE IT

Sequels invariably have a habit of heaping more of the same on top of what was already in place rather than changing a winning formula – and



PICKET LINE Smash through the fence so you have a clear run.

"THE PACE IS UNRELENTING AND FEELS THE PERFECT LENGTH BEFORE THE LITTLE FELLA THREATENS TO OUTSTAY HIS WELCOME."

Army of Zin is no exception. Bigger and better they usually call it. For instance, Maximo's symbiotic boxer shorts return, now available in treasure-seeking and combat boost designs, which to be honest don't significantly expand on the underwear available in the first game. These kinds of extra items serve to reinforce Maximo's transformation into a fully-fledged hard knock, but it means the Grim Reaper's role is downsized even further. We can only remember calling on his services a couple of times when his ability to fly made the irritating leaps of faith that little bit easier. A potentially interesting playable character is pretty much wasted.



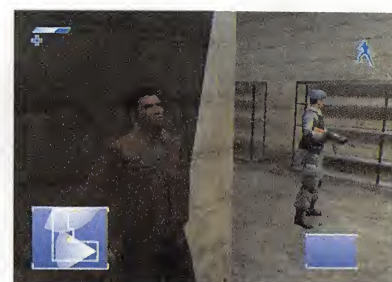
As with every platformer, there's only so much the game can throw at you before its appeal starts to wear a bit thin. Fortunately, at roughly eight hours long the pace is unrelenting – *Army of Zin* feels the perfect length before the little fella threatens to outstay his welcome. To break up the incessant run/jump/fight formula there's the odd boss battle with some fantastically designed monsters, such as a mechanised Cyclops and a clockwork dragon. In fact, every level and enemy is superbly realised. The world of *Maximo* is like something out of Grimms' Fairy Tales where cutesy villagers deserve everything they get for wandering alone in foreboding locations such as the Sinister Forest. The clue is in the name, people.

So there you have it. *Army of Zin* does improve upon the original, but only slightly. The irritating death jumps have been toned down and combat now has a far more central role to play. Ultimately, we suspect most people will opt for the similar-ish *Jak II*, but we thoroughly enjoyed our time *Army of Zin*.

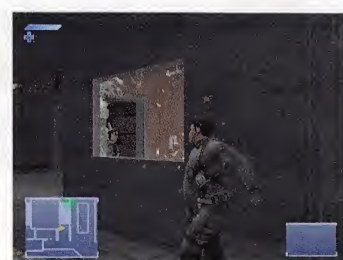
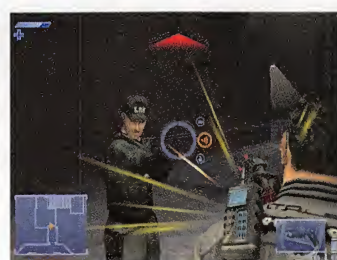
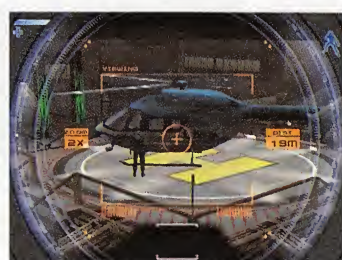
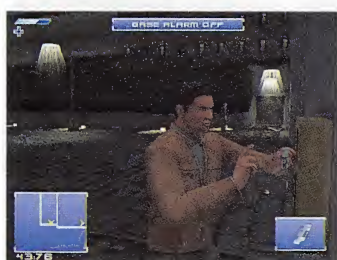
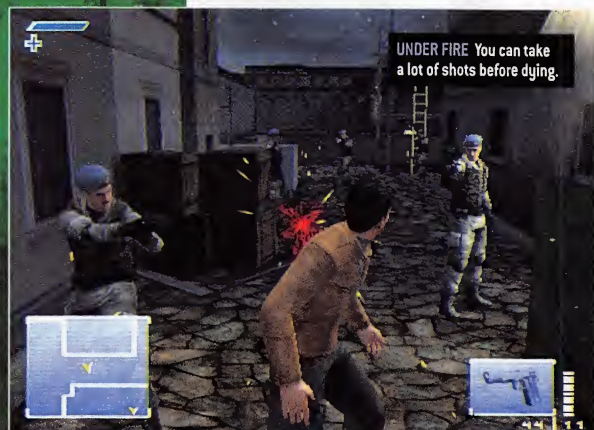
/ JONATHAN TODD

PSW VERDICT

| UPPERS | DOWNERS |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on combat Excellent controls Just the right length Nice line in humour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A bit repetitive Similar to the original Annoying jumping puzzles Extremely linear |
| GRAPHICS > Great backdrops and monsters | 8 |
| SOUNDS > Only the voices let it down | 8 |
| GAMEPLAY > Pacy and unfussy but repetitive | 7 |
| OVERALL SCORE Like a breath of fresh air, even though you know the differences between this and the original are negligible. When dull stealth games are all the rage it's good to get back to basics. | |
| 8 | |



NEW SNEAKERS Shadows make you invisible to the guards.



MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE – OPERATION SURMA

MR CRUISE, WE'VE GOT A GREAT CONCEPT FOR A VIDEOGAME BASED ON – MR CRUISE? ARE YOU STILL THERE, HELLO? THE MIDGET HUNG UP ON ME!

| | |
|-------------|------------------------|
| > TYPE | ACTION ADVENTURE |
| > PLAYERS | 1 |
| > OUT | NOW |
| > PUBLISHER | ATARI |
| > PRICE | \$99.95 |
| > DEVELOPER | PARADIGM ENTERTAINMENT |
| > ONLINE | NO |

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT MISSION:

Impossible – Operation Surma is like, imagine *Splinter Cell* with most of the hardcore aspects safely removed so you can't cut your fingers on them. Imagine *SOCOM* without all the team or online elements. Because Atari's ill-timed *Mission: Impossible* bases its gameplay heavily around the sort of high-class tip-toeing found in those two games, but it can't quite make the grade. And when we say "can't quite", we're being needlessly kind.

You play Ethan Hunt, the same character Tom Cruise played in the *Mission: Impossible* movies and the spy voted most ripe for an obscene limerick. You're not actually Tom, though: there wasn't enough money in the Atari coffers to buy his goofy likeness. He's been replaced with a character utterly devoid of distinguishing features to prevent any costly legal reprisals from the pint-sized actor. And naturally, the new guy has the gravelly voice beloved of all sneaky characters. Surely soft-voiced men are the ones who should be doing all the stealth work? We don't understand.

MISSION UNREASONABLE

The action is based around Hunt's attempts to infiltrate various terrorist networks around the world. This translates into the sort of play we're familiar with from the aforementioned games. Although there's sometimes more than one way to get through an area, everything's scripted so tightly that the feeling of being led around is never far away. Your numerous gadgets are introduced one at a time, and although controlling them isn't too complicated, it can be tough

remembering just which button does what and when. Expect to find yourself unexpectedly punching the air when you thought you were about to take a spy photo. You'll be taking a few of them too, because Hunt can send the pics off to get a rubber mask made, which he can slap on right away to impersonate enemies. The concept's a good one but, inevitably, it can only be used when the game wants to introduce that particular sort of mission. Not fair, especially if you're meant to be a plays-by-his-own-rules kind of guy.



I SEE YOU Use the binocs to snap enemy features for masks.



HEY, NOT THE NIPPLE Being shot at close range hurts. A bit.



M:I-NNOVATIONS

WE TAKE A PEEK INTO ETHAN HUNT'S SPECIAL MAIL ORDER GADGET CATALOGUE.



ELECTRONIC WAR GUN
"SAY GOODBYE TO NAGGING SECURITY ALARMS!" \$2.3m



BINOCULARS
"IT'S LIKE HAVING A WHOLE NEW SET OF EYES!" \$1.2m



WASP
"INSTANT AGONISING DEATH - IN YOUR OWN TIME!" \$6.8m



JETPACK
"IS THIS THE WORLD'S SMALLEST TRANSPORT SOLUTION?" \$127m

1 Take out security cameras with electro-darts and tag important civilians so they appear on your radar. Comes with stylish mock-leather holster.

2 Having trouble reading small print? These can snap guards to create rubber face masks, access vital intel and even let you listen to far away conversations!

3 Don't get up to spy on enemies, just get the wasp to do it for you! As well as a tiny remote-controlled roving camera, the wasp has its own weapons system too.

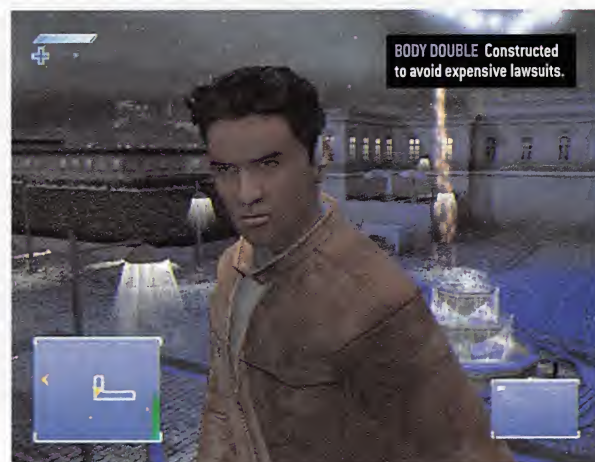
4 This jetpack allows you limited flight over short distances and you can even access unreachable areas for extra espionage. NB: batteries not included.

Stealth kills liven things up a little by letting you strike out from a hidden position without having to venture out into the light, and you can even drop from heights onto hapless enemies, taking them out with a single blow. Mucking up at sneaking is rendered slightly less than exciting by the fact that if you're spotted you can go and kick the buggin' in and start again. You can turn off alarms, too, if you can find the switch boxes fast enough. It's a good way of making sure Hunt can try tasks multiple times,

but hardly as tense as having to hide and wait for guards to come searching for you. Guards must be hidden after they're killed, or their bodies are spotted and everything goes tits up, but it's more of a chore than an exciting gameplay addition.

YOU'VE NEVER SEEN US VERY UPSET

The annoying thing about all this is that *Mission: Impossible* doesn't look too shabby. The new Ethan's got a decent amount of detail to his name, guards are impressively imposing and you're never far from an explosive firefight. But it's all dissolved in a less than thrilling title. So PSW's moral lesson of the day is that even if graphics, sound and ease of play are all ship shape, it all means nothing without a lot of great design... and something extra special to keep you interested, some magic ingredient that transforms the game. In *Metal Gear* it was the astonishing, stylised world that kept making you feel slightly dirty for surprising and charming you in ways you didn't think games could. In *Splinter Cell*, it was the sheer bowel-



clenching, you-versus-the-world detail and realism that didn't let you switch off. But *Mission: Impossible* doesn't have that quintessence, that mystery ingredient.

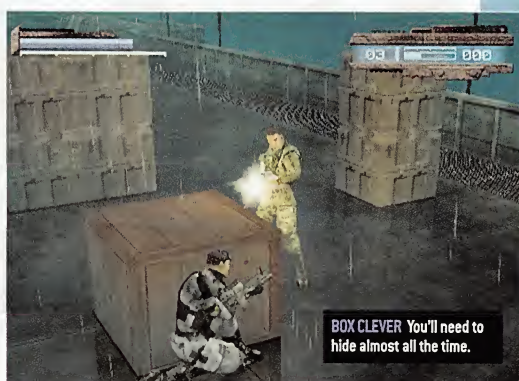
We may not be able to define it, but we're pretty sure you don't get it by cobbling together a movie tie-in several years after the actual cinema release. If you can't do it properly then we'd much rather you didn't bother doing it at all, thanks all the same. This is why stealth should be left to the big boys. Go back to the movies, Ethan Hunt, and take your really rather mundane licence and game with you. Now, isn't this the part where we make a joke about this review self destructing in five seconds? (Embarrassed silence). Lads? (Silence).

/ JOFF BROWN



ONE FALSE MOVE And you'll set off the traps, Ethan. Steady!

| PSW VERDICT | | |
|---|--|---------|
| UPPERS | Looks OK | DOWNERS |
| | Plays OK | |
| | Sounds OK | |
| | It's... what's the word? | |
| GRAPHICS | Reasonably detailed, but overly dingy | 6 |
| | Gravelly voices, overacting. Like a real movie | |
| | If you keep coming back, we'll eat our shoes | |
| | Overall Score | |
| Although <i>Mission Impossible</i> isn't a badly executed game, it kind of mucks everything up by forgetting to put the fun in. Proof that stealth is still PS2's hardest genre to get right. | | 6 |



KILL.SWITCH

KILL.SWITCH IN FOUR WORDS: MORE SHOOTING, LESS STORY.

| | |
|-------------|----------|
| > TYPE | SHOOTING |
| > PLAYERS | 1 |
| > OUT | FEBRUARY |
| > PUBLISHER | SONY |
| > PRICE | \$99.95 |
| > DEVELOPER | NAMCO |
| > ONLINE | NO |

YOU PROBABLY WON'T REMEMBER THIS, BUT EA released a game a few months back by the name of *Dead to Rights*. Third-person action game featuring a maverick cop who busts out of jail to go on a massive, revenge-fuelled bender? Ring any bells yet? No? Nothing particularly ground-breaking, certainly, but it was fun and enjoyable, mainly due to the fact that it simply involved running around and shooting things. Lots.

Fast forward back to the present and here we are with *kill.switch*, which, although not technically a sequel to *Dead to Rights*, is – we're promised – created by much of the same development team. And that's a good thing, because it can only mean yet another game where the main order of the day is going to be running around and shooting things. Lots.

HAVE GUN, WILL USE IT

So we're loving *kill.switch* from the point of view that it appeals to all our base, gun-blasting instincts, but there's more to it than that. There's a refreshingly simple story for a start. Remember the plot from *RoboCop*, where a 'reconditioned' machine/cop goes a bit mental because he didn't have his memory wiped properly? Well that's pretty much *kill.switch*'s storyline in a nutshell.

And then there's the game itself. Third-person shooting and running we know about, but it's the way *kill.switch* does it that really makes a difference. 'Military Cover Tactics' is how the blurb on the box describes the crux of *kill.switch*'s gameplay, but it turns out to be a fancy way of saying you get to spend most of the time hiding behind things. Not in a stealthy, avoid-the-bad-guys kind of way, but in a 'shit, better hide behind this wooden crate until the onslaught of gunfire finishes and I can lean out and fire back,' kind of way.

And it works. Brilliantly. Every level has been perfectly designed for maximum running, diving

and ducking behind cover action. If *Time Crisis* was a third-person game that didn't involve using a lightgun it would be *kill.switch*. It's that good. Push your chap up against a wall and he'll automatically stand in the best position to peer out and fire a few rounds back at the enemy. Dive at a pile of tyres and he'll stay there until he can pop his head up and chuck a grenade at his would-be killers.

The control set-up is perfect, the range of weapons available is good and there's a pleasing amount of attention to detail lavished on both the sound effects and music. There's even a movie-tinged atmosphere about some of the more



HARD TARGET Using the scope's great – until you're spotted.



KILL DRILL The body count can rise to horrific proportions.



RAIN MAN A nod to *Metal Gear* in the raindrops falling on the camera.

KILL COUNT

WITNESS *KILL SWITCH*'S HORRIFIC BODY COUNT RACK ITSELF UP.



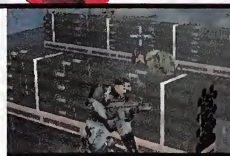
THE TRAINING MISSION

Learn how to take control of your rewired angel of death. The only casualties you'll be causing are of the cardboard cut-out target variety. Still worth hitting them between the eyes, though.



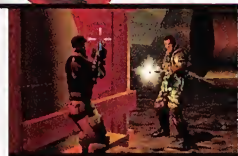
THE MIDDLE-EAST EXCURSION

With Saddam safely tucked away at US Military HQ, dining on the luxurious proceeds of a hastily spun-out cash for information deal, it's time to go out and kill the last gasps of Iraqi resistance.



THE OIL RIG RIOT

This second major campaign takes its visual inspiration from *Metal Gear* and its action quotient from an Arnie film. Blow people up with C4 then shoot them in the head.

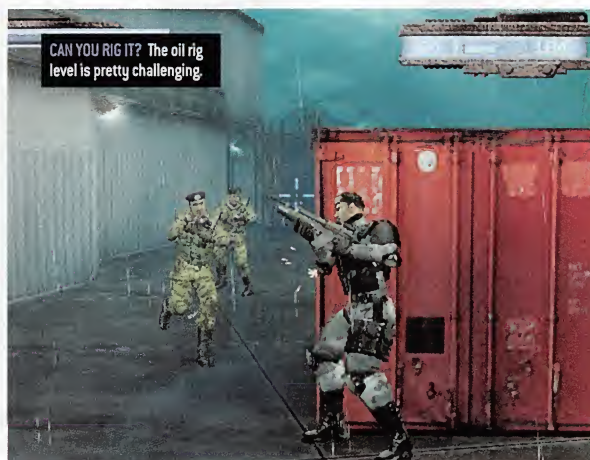


THE KOREAN CRACKDOWN

A trip to infiltrate a Korean lab turns into a full-on turkey shoot as alarms get tripped, grenades get thrown and body bags mount up quicker than you can say the word 'Hiroshima'.



FIRING BLIND Stick your gun out and fire in safety. But you'll usually miss.



CAN YOU RIG IT? The oil rig level is pretty challenging.

"KILL SWITCH IS THE SORT OF GAME THAT SCREAMS 'RESCUE ME FROM THE SALE BASKET!' AT YOU."

highly charged, kinetic action scenes. But, as there's always a but with these things, it's not perfect – not least of all when it comes to the camera, which manages to swing about like a drunken whore on a merry-go-round.

KILL AND KILL AGAIN

Another downer is the script, which makes use of the fact you're supposed to be remotely controlling your soldier of fortune from the safety of your secret bunker to churn out some truly appalling self-referential quips. "How did he handle?" your faceless commander asks at the end of the first mission. "Great!" you reply, "Just like playing a

video game!" Look, we know we're playing a game – we don't need a painfully unfunny reminder of the fact.

Kill switch even manages to squeeze in a couple of digs at games like *Metal Gear Solid* and *Splinter Cell* (blatant visual influences, the pair) with not so classic lines such as "We didn't hire you for your stealth talents!" Again, about as funny as breaking your leg. At a family funeral. "It's like I'm in some kind of computer game!" Note to game developers: we don't ever want to see remarks like this in your games ever again. It's brings about a sense of embarrassment on a par with discussing erectile dysfunction problems. Over dinner with your mother.

And while we're still discussing the negatives, *kill switch* is remarkably short – clocking in at a surprisingly fat-free five to six hours – and annoyingly lacking in variety. A second, harder, difficulty level is the only real encouragement you get to replay the game, but will you want to when the dramatic impact of the plot twist is lost once you've played it through first time? Somehow we doubt it.

But let's not be too harsh on *kill switch*, because there's no denying it's an entertaining little game. It's slick and playable and, up against

this month's other big third-person action game, *Max Payne 2*, it's an immeasurably more appealing prospect. It's the sort of game that screams "Rescue me from the sale basket!" at you. If somebody came along and put it in a wallet-friendly double-pack with *Dead to Rights*, it would be a cheap and cheerful hardcore shooting double-act extraordinaire. But it's not: it's a brand new, full-price game – and on slightly shaky legs as a result. Definitely worth buying if you've just won the Lottery, though.

/ MARK ROBINS



UNDER FIRE It only takes a few shots to die, so be careful.

PSM VERDICT

UPPERS

- > Slick controls
- > Plenty of shooting
- > Sounds good
- > Minimal story

DOWNERS

- > Confusing camera
- > Dreadful script
- > Lacks variety
- > Way too short

GRAPHICS > A poor man's *Metal Gear Solid* at best

6

SOUNDS > Sounds just like real murder. Pleading

8

GAMEPLAY > It's repetitive, but it feels so right

8

OVERALL SCORE

Kill switch surprised us. A low-profile title that turned out to be remarkably fun and playable. Short and repetitive for the money, but better value than a round of drinks at Circular Quay.

7



TEAM USA The beachball isn't part of the game. It's a 'joke'.



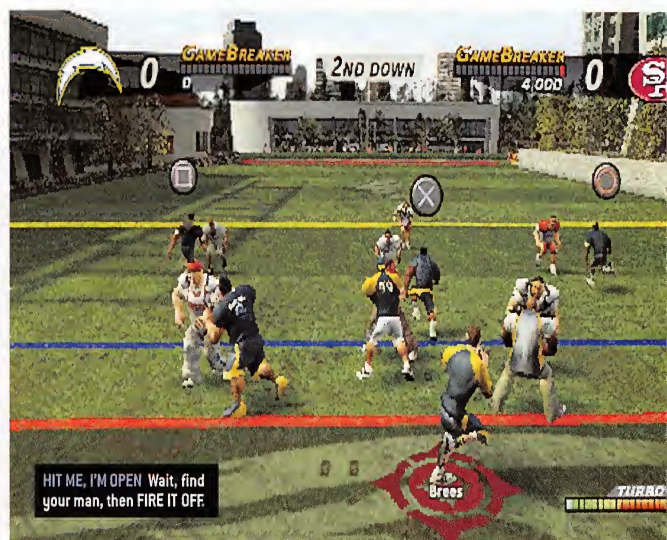
NOUGHTS AND CROSSES Amateurs may find this frightening.



INSIDE INFO What US football refers to as a 'fight'.



STREETS AHEAD Evasion techniques help perform fancy running moves.



HIT ME, I'M OPEN Wait, find your man, then FIRE IT OFF

NFL STREET

ELECTRONIC ARTS DECIDES TO MAKE US SPORT SIMPLER, IN A BLATANT ATTEMPT TO BRING GRIDIRON TO THE MASSES

| | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| > TYPE | AMERICAN FOOTBALL |
| > PLAYERS | 1-4 |
| > OUT | NOW |
| > PUBLISHER | EA |
| > PRICE | \$99.95 |
| > DEVELOPER | EA SPORTS BIG |
| > ONLINE | NO |

ONLY ELECTRONIC ARTS COULD BE SO BOLD

as to add a Turbo gauge to a sport and get away with it. This is American football reinvented to appeal to the Red Bull generation. It's faster, easier, stupider, louder and comes in colours not normally found in nature. Seven-on-seven isn't how the sport is played, nor is there ever a constant hip-hop soundtrack playing in the background whenever we see the it on Fox. This is what US football would be like if it was invented tomorrow for an Nickelodeon Saturday

evening show where two families compete against each other to win a holiday.

Problem is, *NFL Street* is neither dumbed down enough for the idiot kids monged out of their heads on E-numbers, or hardcore enough for the true American footie fans to get seriously into. Here's why. Selecting a Quick Game throws you straight into the action. Which is good. That sort of thing is always handy and the makers should be applauded in a non-patronising fashion for putting this in. Really, we appreciate it even though we might not always show it.

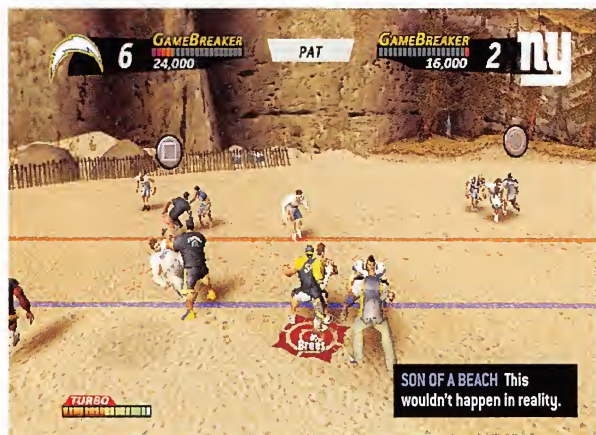
However, should you not already be au fait with the rules of this American rugby thing, you'll find its play options totally bewildering. Lists of attacking moves are a bewildering array of crosses and arrows that will confuse newcomers – despite the simplification, this isn't a pick-up-and-play American football game. *NFL Street* gives you tips on how to play as you play, but they centre on the fancy, superficial stuff – like how to spin when running and ways to gain extra points by pulling off flash moves.

DID I JUST SCORE A GOAL?

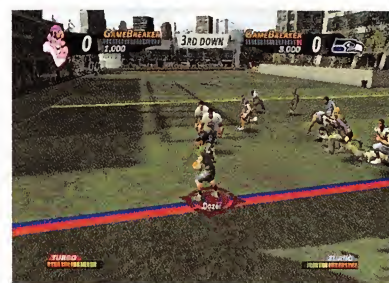
At no point does *NFL Street* actually tell you what the rules of US football actually are, so there's a chance the casual, fair-weather gaming fan will be completely bewildered by offensive running,

passing and special tactics screens that pop up each time it's your 'go'. Even in this simpler, happier world where everything is accompanied by DJs scratching in the background and jive-talkin' insults flying all over the place, you're still required to make plays and figure out your offensive and defensive tactics like you're John Madden's son and heir.

But you can get away without knowing too much, thanks to the ease of play. Randomly select an offensive play then press R2 to see how your men are going to run, along with handy buttons signalling what you need to press to make your Quarterback (the Andrew Johns type in the middle there) make the pass. Or run with it yourself, sending out decoy runners. That's your



SON OF A BEACH This wouldn't happen in reality.



NEWS IN BRIEF Four attempts to move ten yards. Easy, really.

Dear PSW



MAN'S SHAME OVER RULES CONFUSION

DEAR PSW,

I'm scared to play American football because I don't understand the rules. As far as I can see there's just a lot of standing around, then someone throws me the ball and I drop it and everything goes wrong. I'm scared to let everyone down and don't want to play it in case my team starts to hate me. What can I do?

PSW REPLIES:

Don't panic about dropping the ball – you have four chances! If you make a mistake your team-mates won't hate you – occasional errors are the nature of the game. American football allows you *four* goes to move the ball ten yards down the pitch, and if you do this you're allowed another four attempts to move a further ten. Everyone on the team will drop the ball sometimes, so don't worry – you still have another three goes. Take it easy and enjoy yourself – once you relax you will perform much better.



“IF YOU'RE NOT ALREADY AU FAIT WITH THE RULES OF AMERICAN FOOTBALL YOU'LL FIND ITS PLAY OPTIONS BEWILDERING.”

basic premise of American football, just in case you never bothered learning the rules.

Defence is much more of a lottery, with your decisions often having little effect on the outcome of your opponent's unstoppable moves. You pick your play basically by guessing what you think the opposition is going to do, then hope for the best. There's a healthy random element to it all, with spills, fumbles and hilarious mishaps turning possession of the ball over regularly and opening the game wide. But then that's what *NFL Street*'s about – it wouldn't be the crazy, laugh-a-second game it is if you ground out dull 0-0 matches by running the clock down and holding on for the draw.

If you find all that too hard why not bin the rules altogether, thanks to *NFL Street*'s option to ditch the focus on touchdowns completely and play solely for Style points. Earned for classy moves and yards covered, playing for points certainly changes the balance of the game. In two-player matches against another person you're suddenly enjoying the thing ten times

more, thanks to *NFL Street* forcing you to take more risks and try the Extreme options.

SCORE GREATER THAN OR EQUAL TO THE SQUARE ROOT OF NINE TOUCHDOWNS

There are also lists of set scenarios to get through, which challenge you to perform certain specific tasks in return for team-boosting stat points. Beat the Raiders by 14 points, score a certain number of touchdowns – that sort of



CELEBRATE GOOD TIMES Standing around is a key part of it all.



THE RULES Our 'Quarterback' has just 'thrown' the 'ball'.

thing. All nice ways of making the game feel different, and just perhaps making people that really don't know the first thing about American football blunder through it long enough to learn the stupidly complicated rules.

Like most EA Sports BIG productions, *NFL Street* wins on presentation. From the second hip-hop/metal hybrid Korn featuring Nas kicks in on the game set-up screen, you know this is a loud, stupid game that's fun for as long as your brain can stand this blazing assault. However, with its seven-a-side, trashy, is-nothing-sacred reinterpretation of the rules, *NFL Street* is unlikely to win over fans of the *Madden* series. And with its reliance on play-making and a knowledge of the basics required too, it's not really a game for the dribbling arcade gridiron novice either. So who the hell is *NFL Street* for?

/ GARY CUTLACK

PSW VERDICT

| UPPERS | DOWNERS |
|---|--------------------------------|
| > Great rap and rock tunes | > Too simple for gridiron fans |
| > Behind-the-scenes bonuses | > Too complex for arcade fans |
| > Simple, immediate action | > Too stupid for everyone |
| > Nice 'style' play option | > Dodgy-looking too |
| GRAPHICS > Big, chunky men but nothing outstanding. | 6 |
| SOUNDS > Good tunes, backchat, noise aplenty. | 8 |
| GAMEPLAY > Good if you're the non-demanding type. | 7 |

OVERALL SCORE
We were expecting a dumbed-down US footie sim. It's not – there are tactics behind the bravado, albeit in a simpler package. It's a good introduction to US football, if that's what you're after.

6



LEGACY OF KAIN: DEFIANCE

SOUL REAVER'S RAZIEL AND HIS UNDEAD MASTER KAIN TEAM UP TO SAVE THE WORLD. PUSHING BLOCKS AND LOCATING KEYS PROBABLY ISN'T THE BEST WAY TO GO ABOUT IT.

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| > TYPE | ACTION ADVENTURE |
| > PLAYERS | 1 |
| > OUT | NOW |
| > PUBLISHER | EIDOS |
| > PRICE | \$99.95 |
| > DEVELOPER | CRYSTAL DYNAMICS |
| > ONLINE | NO |

LEGACY OF KAIN IS A MYTHOLOGY YOU EITHER love or couldn't give a toss about. Its anti-heroes, Kain and Raziel, are either the two most memorable characters ever to grace a game or just beard-stroking exposition devices serving what seems like hundreds of long-winded cut-scenes. But whereas before you had to suffer as pages of pompous dialogue was spouted by the pair, now you can skip them. Which oddly enough is a bit of a shame. If in the past the convoluted story left you lost, prepare to finally have some plot threads wrapped up. It's not all neat and tidy, but the pointers towards yet another sequel won't leave you as bemused.

The twist this time is that both characters are



BEHIND YOU The camera is rubbish at choosing the best angle.

now playable in the one game: vampire Kain in the 'real world' material plane and half-demon Raziel beginning in the psychedelic spectral plane. But the potential for different playing styles stubbornly remains untapped though. Their skills are too alike, with similar powers of telekinesis and a similar way of replenishing energy. In previous games the pair could use their claws and boasted a fine range of gory finishing moves, but now they're limited to swinging the Soul Reaver blade and a few special abilities that quickly wear thin. The puzzles haven't progressed from simple block-pushing and key-collecting drills since the first *Legacy of Kain* game either. And when puzzles don't involve blocks and keys, they concern the now familiar trick of shifting into the spectral plane to ghost through gates and then finding a way to return to the material plane.

Worst of all is the roving camera that forces a lot of combat off-screen, a problem also making it easy to misread platform jumps or overlook a significant object needed to exit an area. Combined with some ambiguous mission objectives and no guiding radar, this means a lot of time is spent tediously backtracking to see if you missed anything.

And yet there's something compelling about the game that drives you on despite its flaws. For

all their lengthy dialogue, the two leads are certainly memorable, not least because they're so brutal. You can use telekinesis to levitate enemies and impale them on spikes, or bring them to you for feeding, a disgusting act that sees Kain sucking out their blood like a Dyson vacuum cleaner. But the fact that enemies often don't attack you when you're feeding compromises the longevity, meaning that you can wade through huge sections of the game in one sitting.

So unless you're a completist desperate to add *Defiance* to other *Kain* games in your collection, think hard before investing in this.

/ JONATHAN TODD

PSW VERDICT

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--|--|--|
| > UPPERS | | > DOWNERS | |
| Strong characters | | Completely linear | |
| Can skip cut-scenes | | As pompous as ever | |
| Fluent combat | | Convoluted story | |
| Wraps up plot threads | | Clumsy camera | |
| GRAPHICS | | Gorgeous backdrops and smooth combat | |
| SOUNDS | | The acting takes austere to mean pompous | |
| GAMEPLAY | | Old, formulaic and too short | |
| OVERALL SCORE | | It's one above average game when it should have been two games for the price of one. The story has thankfully moved on a bit, but it's a pity the gameplay has taken a step backwards. | |
| | | 6 | |



Sawed-Off Shotgun
EAT LEAD Stylish slo-mo takes centre-stage.



SLIDE AWAY Skid along the floor and keep firing.



STEP BY STEP Clear areas of enemies and move on.



WHIP ROUND 180° turns catch enemies off guard.



MENTALIST Max's warped dreams are also violent.

MAX PAYNE 2: THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE

THE WORLD-WEARY, HARDBOILED DETECTIVE IS BACK ON THE BEAT AND IN LURRRVE. BUT WITH A TITLE LIKE THAT DON'T EXPECT A HAPPY ENDING.

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| > TYPE | ACTION ADVENTURE |
| > PLAYERS | 1 |
| > OUT | NOW |
| > PUBLISHER | TAKE 2 |
| > PRICE | \$99.95 |
| > DEVELOPER | REMEDY |
| > ONLINE | NO |

MAX PAYNE IS THE DEADPAN EQUIVALENT OF

Kenny from *South Park*. "Bugger" was his blank reply in the first game to the news that his wife and kid had been murdered, before promptly slaughtering every criminal in New York. And now lightning has struck twice with the discovery that his latest squeeze is a hitwoman and the number one suspect in his latest case. Someone obviously doesn't want him to ever get laid again.

The complex plot is told through comic book panels, cut-scenes before and during missions, deliberately hokey dialogue and playable psychedelic flashbacks. Like the first game then, but with longer tea breaks between shootouts. Events are told out of sequence and there are so many self-parodying in-jokes and references to the original that it seems like the developer is having a lot more fun than you. Still, the narrative is certainly one of *Max Payne 2*'s strongest points and it's nice to see a flawed hero for once.

Everything else feels recycled. The action is still rigidly about bursting into relatively small rooms or corridors and blowing away three or four enemies before moving on to the next area. Some attempt has been made to alter the formula with the introduction of partners who you fight alongside, though their contribution is minimal in the overall scheme of things. There are also some ill-advised platform jumping sections – one of which is pretty good by paying respect to *Se7en*'s apartment chase scenes – since Max himself proves a pretty unwieldy figure to manoeuvre carefully.

Bullet time is still what *Max Payne* does best, better than any other game in fact. Instead of having to dive every time you want to go into slow-mo, Max can now stay on his feet and dodge lead that way. The more enemies he takes down the slower any remaining criminals move, so if you're really accurate he becomes almost

unbeatable until the bullet time meter is drained. If you do go for the full monty, Max now stylishly continues his slide across the floor emptying his clip – whereas before he got to his feet as soon as he hit the deck, leaving himself vulnerable for a second or two.

What these shootouts confirm is that the sequel is again about quality over quantity. Clocking in at about six or seven hours it's even shorter than the original, though the long load times and no quicksave option tend to stretch levels out. PS2 seems to have been given short shrift all round, and even we have to admit that it suffers from major slowdown compared to the Xbox version. Once you've tired of the extra game modes there's no real reason to go back for more, but while it lasts it's generally good.

/ JONATHAN TODD



FULL FRONTAL Keep firing while diving over the top of bullets.



SKY HIGH Aim for flammable barrels and stand well back.

PS2 VERDICT

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| > UPBERS | > DOWNERS |
| Excellent plot | Too short |
| Kinetic action | Confusing for newcomers |
| Improved bullet time | Formulaic shootouts |
| Extra game modes | Weaker on PS2 |

GRAPHICS > Nowhere near as good as Xbox **7**

SOUNDS > Deadpan delivery, blistering gunfire **9**

GAMEPLAY > High quality while it lasts **7**

OVERALL SCORE

The gripping story and stylish action just about compensate for what is actually a pretty awful conversion job. We blame the rush to get it out in time for Chrimbo rather than PS2.

7

MINI REVIEWS

ANYONE INTERESTED IN A DOG SIMULATOR? (SILENCE). WHAT ABOUT AMERICAN FOOTBALL? (COUGH... SILENCE).



ESPN NFL FOOTBALL



WELL, WELL, WELL. WHAT HAVE WE HERE...

| | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| > TYPE | AMERICAN FOOTBALL |
| > PLAYERS | 1-4 |
| > OUT | NOW |
| > PUBLISHER | SEGA |
| > PRICE | \$99.95 |
| > DEVELOPER | SEGA |
| > ONLINE | NO |

WE WERE PRETTY DOWN ON SEGA'S LAST ATTEMPT AT

American football with *NFL 2K3*, but we're pleasantly surprised by the improved control, graphics and excellent animation here. With the actual football nonsense out of the way, we'll get on with explaining the far more interesting extras which make *NFL Football* the ESPN-enhanced beast it is.

For example, in the Career mode, you'll get to watch highlights of other teams playing in the league if you like, which is always a bonus. You also have the Crib, your luxury/tacky apartment with home cinema (for watching in-game video), games room (for mini-games), trophy room (for medals you've won), and tropical fish (because that's what rich folks have). But the new star of this game is the uniquely, stupidly fascinating First-person mode. Want to know what it feels like to be a footballer's eyeball? Now's the time to find out. Watch as you run up the field, only to be attacked by hideous half-human creatures with warpaint on their faces and murder on their minds. Watch the touchline get ever closer before you're pulled off your feet. Gaze in fury as the ball bounces off your helmet. It's not as confusing or dull as it might sound, either, with pointers to show where attackers are coming from and rapid changes of character so you're always in the hot seat and never left watching the quarterback run down the field while you chew the fat with the rival wide receiver. It's a gimmick, sure, but it kind of works. And in this shoddy world, 'kind of' is kind of good enough for us. Considering we didn't really like the last Madden game, this isn't a bad title at all.

/ JONATHAN TODD

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE

Those not enamoured of Mr Madden's series can find some superior and rather in-depth play beneath a cartload of stunning presentation. Like the fat man say: "It's good!"

7



ESPN NBA BASKETBALL



TALL TYPES AS DIGITAL PUPPETS MADE TO JUMP HIGH FOR YOUR AMUSEMENT.

| | |
|-------------|------------|
| > TYPE | BASKETBALL |
| > PLAYERS | 1-4 |
| > OUT | NOW |
| > PUBLISHER | SEGA |
| > PRICE | \$99.95 |
| > DEVELOPER | SEGA |
| > ONLINE | NO |

THE FIRST THING YOU'LL NOTICE ABOUT ESPN NBA

Basketball is the look of the thing. Everyone looks perfect: there's Kobe Bryant and, erm, all those other really famous basketball players we've never actually heard of, all standing there in gleaming pseudo-reality. But it's not just cosmetic enhancements to this year's game – the gameplay has had a significant overhaul too, although it's never quite as fluid and natural-feeling as EA's version. The sim-like aspects of Sega's earlier basketball titles have been downplayed in favour of a slightly more easygoing style, but expect to spend time getting used to the controls before you're slam dunking with the best.

The attention-grabbing device here is the 24/7 mode, which has you creating and controlling one player and pushing him up through the ranks of college teams into the pros and right up to Jordan-style superstardom. As well as normal games, there are all manner of challenges from real-life stars, who take you under their wing and even hang out with you if you're lucky. It's a major gameplay addition, and arguably works the best out of any of the three ESPN games' innovations.

So it's not perfect, but 24/7 mode is a real eye-opener and the presentation's second to none. But what lets *NBA* down is the missing online option. Like its two lazy ESPN brothers, *NBA* isn't net connected over here as it is in the US. Considering the point of being online is that it doesn't matter where you are in the world, why should we be denied it? Not that we actually want to play basketball online, really. It's just the principle of the thing.

/ RICH MELVILLE

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE

We still prefer *NBA Street Vol 2* to this, but that's because we don't care for 'real' basketball games that much. Not a slam-dunk, but it shoots for the hoop and gets it in, too.

8



ESPN NHL HOCKEY



TOOTHLESS CANADIANS BATTER EACH OTHER WITH CURVED STICKS.

| | |
|-------------|------------|
| > TYPE | ICE HOCKEY |
| > PLAYERS | 1-4 |
| > OUT | NOW |
| > PUBLISHER | SEGA |
| > PRICE | \$99.95 |
| > DEVELOPER | SEGA |
| > ONLINE | NO |

WE ALL KNOW THAT HOCKEY AND PLAYSTATION GO

together like lager and PlayStation. Often they come in threes, with great long nights of glory spent beered up, hollering at the screen and cans getting chucked across sofas. If you're lucky, there's even other people with you. Anyway, like the other games on the page, Sega's sports series (used to be *2K3*, now it's *ESPN*) has always been a bit player in the world of gaming, with Electronic Arts' titles usually leading the way. In the hockeying world, that's all changed now.

ESPN NHL Hockey pulls out all the stops. Gameplay's been honed to near perfection, with the right-hand analog stick adding all sorts of cunning dodge manoeuvres to your charge up the rink. All the ESPN-related televisual bells and whistles have been souped up – replays look great, ice gets scuffed, reflective surfaces duly reflect better than ever, and player's expressions have finally stopped resembling drugged-up zombies. Now, if you give yourself a sharp, disorientating bash round the head you won't be able to tell whether you're watching real or digital hockey. (Trust us on this rather than trying it out for yourself. Oh, go on then.)

There's even Air Hockey and a simplified Mini Rink for when you want to bash a puck round with a mate and can't be bothered with the realistic side. The downsides? Well, we're repeating ourselves now, but it's not online unlike the US version and the Career mode still isn't as detailed as fans might expect. However it's more than adequate for anyone who a) plays occasionally b) with his friends c) pissed. But is this you?

/ JOFF BROWN

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE

This is our NHL game of choice. Not that we'd choose to play an NHL game, you understand. But they really should have made more of an effort to get it working online.

9



DOG'S LIFE

CAN THIS CANINE SIMULATOR AVOID BEING A DOG'S DINNER?

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| > TYPE | ACTION ADVENTURE |
| > PLAYERS | 1 |
| > OUT | NOW |
| > PUBLISHER | SONY |
| > PRICE | \$89.95 |
| > DEVELOPER | FRONTIER |
| > ONLINE | NO |

ANY GAME THAT REWARDS YOU FOR FARTING,

shitting and pissing on the ground in full view of other characters has got to be applauded, though it's to be expected when the hero is a dog.

It's an idea that strives not to be a gimmick and *Dog's Life* almost pulls it off. As pooch Jake you're tasked with rescuing best friend Daisy from a dognapper, but first you must learn basic canine skills. By entering the first-person Smellovision mode all scents become visible coloured vapours; collecting ten green smells opens up a mini-game, 50 purple scents earns Jake a bone and so on. Mini-games usually involve racing against another dog, with victory giving temporary control over that animal to reach previously inaccessible areas.

Bones matter the most as they improve Jake's chances of winning these repetitive, if increasingly tough, mini-games. Most are earned by retrieving items for humans, a process that gets increasingly gimmicky as the items become more and more silly, not least because they're easy enough to acquire without relying on a dog's help.

Apart from Jake's sarcastic thoughts there's not a lot here to appeal to those over the age of 12. The puzzles are too simple, the mini-games too monotonous and much of the game is played from the uninteresting Smellovision perspective - an intriguing idea that's never fully capitalised on. Little 'uns will adore it though. The dogs move convincingly and Jake's voice has plenty of character, while the toilet humour is rude and crude enough without causing parents sleepless nights.

/ JONATHAN TODD

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE

Though more unique features should have been wrung from the canine set-up, it's hard to dislike this wholesome game. The perfect post-Xmas present for a young relative.

6



FLIPNIC

THEY CALL HIM FLIPPER, FLIPPER, FASTER THAN LIGHTNING...

| | |
|-------------|---------|
| > TYPE | ACTION |
| > PLAYERS | 1-2 |
| > OUT | JANUARY |
| > PUBLISHER | UBISOFT |
| > PRICE | \$49.95 |
| > DEVELOPER | SONY |
| > ONLINE | NO |

CONSIDERING THAT PINBALL HAS BEEN A STAPLE

fixture of amusement arcades since saucy seaside postcards were all the rage, we're amazed at the lack of decent video game flipper action. *Flipnic* aims to put that right with a typically psychedelic Japanese spin on the pastime.

Long gone are the days when you had just three balls and a tiny table to get yourself on the high score chart. Now the standard design is to have multiple tables connected by rails, about 77 balls careering down the rails at once towards your flippers, and multiple ridiculous challenges based around the table's theme. You know you're in for a challenge when each table comes with its own map.

To unlock every table you must complete some 60 missions across each of the five themed environments. For instance, the biology world includes everything from UFOs that must be destroyed to waterfalls that change the pace of the ball - none of which makes much sense, but there's never enough time to question what you're supposed to be doing let alone know what that is in the first place.

Despite the flashy presentation, including disorientating camera spins around the ball as it moves between tables, at its heart lie solid physics. The ball basically behaves as you'd expect once environment effects and different gradients take hold. The flippers are a little unresponsive and the action is interrupted far too much by mini-games, but overall this should satisfy pinball wizards looking for a new challenge.

/ JOFF BROWN

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE

Look, it's pinball. You either love playing pinball games or you don't. If you do you'll like *Flipnic* too. A lot. And if you don't, well, we can't do much. Except look blank.

6



I-NINJA

HE'S A VERY SMALL MAN WITH A MASSIVE EGO AND PERSONALITY.

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| > TYPE | ACTION ADVENTURE |
| > PLAYERS | 1 |
| > OUT | FEBRUARY |
| > PUBLISHER | SONY |
| > PRICE | TBA |
| > DEVELOPER | ARGONAUT |
| > ONLINE | NO |

WHEN A GAME KICKS OFF WITH THE HERO

nonsensically decapitating his own Sensei in a fit of rage, it's a fair bet that the rest isn't supposed to be taken very seriously.

Ninja is your classic third-person platform hero. He's agile, quick-witted and diminutive with a distinct likeness to Bomberman. But far funnier as he reels off one-liners to every enemy he splits in two. He jumps, swims, grinds along rails *Tony Hawk*-style, swings on rings to reach platforms, runs sideways along walls and also up them, and uses his sword as a whirring chopper blade to glide safely back to ground.

He basically does everything you'd expect from a platform character, which isn't such a bad thing. The game's design is formulaic to a tee, but then every so often *I-Ninja* pulls something original out of the bag. Like the mini-games, for example. Over the course of the five game worlds you get to do such things as fight a giant robot in a boxing match, balance atop a rolling orb as it moves along narrow platforms, and fire cannons at ships and hang-gliders. More original ideas such as these and we could have been looking at a classic.

The missions play in order, but as you complete the mini-games and move through the ninja belts from white to yellow to green to black, they open up out of order. This also helps to keep things fresh when the gameplay itself becomes repetitive. And that's what saves *I-Ninja*. Yes, there's little here you haven't seen at least a dozen times before, but at least it picks some quality games to mimic and does justice to them all.

/ JONATHAN TODD

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE

Not a platform game classic by any means, but huge fun while it lasts and there's even the odd surprise to be found among the formulaic design.

7

WHAT'S ON YOUR

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COVER GAME



SOCOM II

THE SEALS ARE BACK, AND THEY'RE BARKING MAD.

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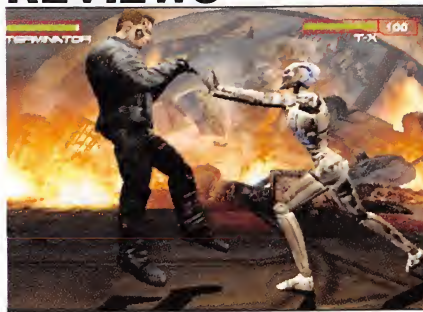
PREVIEWS



HEADHUNTER REDEMPTION

Early footage of Sega's latest foray into the super-sneaky world of stealth. Early signs are that it'll be at least seven times better than the first game. At least.

REVIEWS



TERMINATOR 3

See the digital recreation of California's newly elected Governor getting his arse kicked by a female robot. Literally minutes of fun guaranteed!

NEWS



ARC: TWILIGHT OF THE SPIRITS

There's nothing like an absolutely, clinically insane Japanese adventure title to bring the light back to our glazed eyes. See why, right now.

DISK IN FULL

>> **SPECIAL FEATURES** Socom II: U.S. Navy SEALs, Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance 2, Gran Turismo 4: Toyota Edition >> **EXCLUSIVES** Forbidden Siren, I-Ninja, Deus Ex 2: The Invisible War, Conan, Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm, Spawn Armageddon >> **NEWS** Arc: Twilight of the Spirits >> **PREVIEWS** Firefighter FD.18, Megaman X7, Wrath Unleashed, Downhill Domination, Headhunter Redemption >> **REVIEWS** Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines, Mission: Impossible – Operation Surma, Fame Academy, The Hobbit, Destruction Derby Arenas, The Sims: Bustin' Out!, Legacy of Kain: Defiance, Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon, ESPN NHL Hockey, ESPN NBA Basketball, ESPN NFL Football, Curse: The Eye of Isis, Premiere Manager 03/04 >> **CHEATS** XIII, WWE SmackDown! Here Comes The Pain >> **EXTRAS** Timesplitters 2 Platinum Review, Making of True Crime Streets of LA, Outlaw Golf Trailer, Downhill Domination Multiangle Feature

EXCLUSIVES



FORBIDDEN SIREN

Watch our exclusive footage of *Forbidden Siren* with a hanky in your hand, a nappy in your trousers and a gigantic, opaque sofa to hide behind. It's chilling.

SPECIAL FEATURES GRAN TURISMO 4

THERE'S NOTHING ELSE LIKE IT IN THE ENTIRE WORLD.

We probably don't need to tell you that *Gran Turismo 4* is all set to be the Best Driving Game in the Whole Bloody World, bar none. But what you don't yet know is to what lengths we've gone to procure you even more footage of this game of the gods. Stick the DVD in your console, computer or player and we'll show you a selection of tracks which have never been seen before. All this and multi-angle replays so good, you can count the number of sparks from the brake pads as the cars spin near the camera. If this doesn't bring you to a throbbing, sack-tightening, gasping climax of racing joy, then quite frankly there's no hope for you. Honestly, some people.



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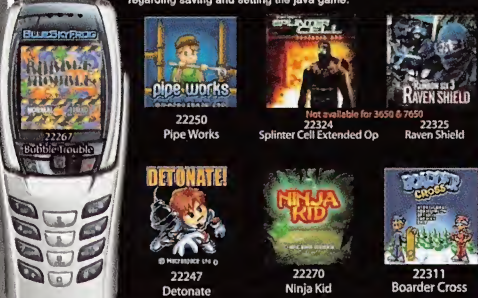
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22315
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22125
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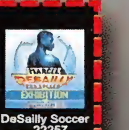
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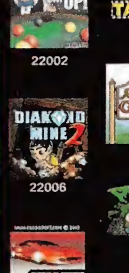
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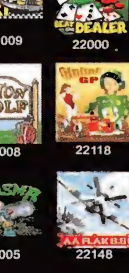
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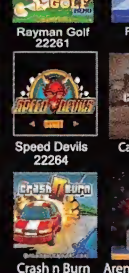
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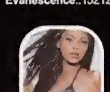
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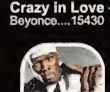
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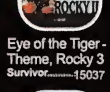
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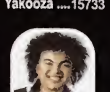
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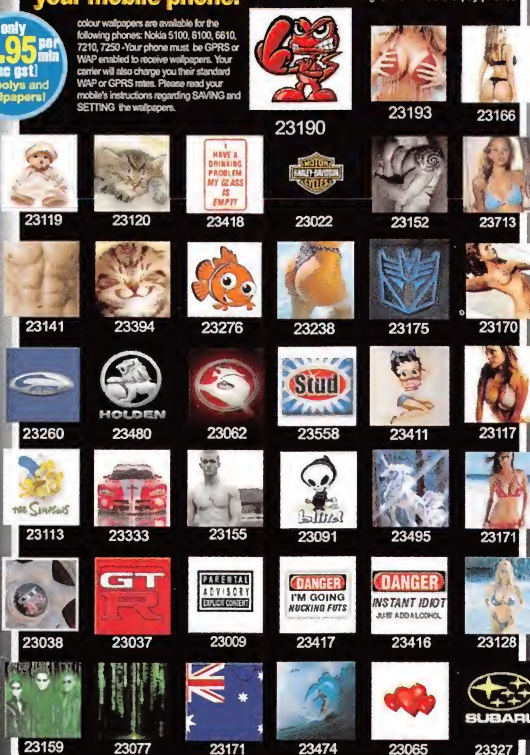
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Get Free - The Vines.....5720
Tocayo - System of a Down.....5731

DANCE
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Get Free - Van Morrison.....5423

POP
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CHARTS

| | |
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| THE CAT EMPIRE: HELLO | 52079 |
| R.KELLY: THOIA THOING | 51960 |
| HARDY TO BREATHE | 51995 |
| KELLY: MISS INDEPENDENT | 51679 |
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| BLU CANTRELL: BREATHE | 51427 |
| BENNY BENASSI: SATISFACTION | 50094 |
| R.KELLY: IGNITION | 50085 |
| BLACK.E.PEAS: SHUT UP | 52063 |
| 50CENT: IN DA CLUB | 50006 |
| SHAKE YA TAILFEATHER | 50130 |
| EMINEM: BUSINESS | 50087 |
| EMINEM: WITHOUT ME | 50041 |
| SEAN PAUL: GET BUSY..... | 50081 |
| JUSTIN T/LAKE: SENORITA | 51611 |
| PINK: FEEL GOOD TIME | 50070 |
| I KNOW WHAT YOU WANT | 50068 |
| H/DURF: SO YESTERDAY | 51816 |
| A.PEREZ: ANGEL | 50125 |
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| LINKIN PARK: NUMB | 51863 |
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| ACDC: LONG WAY TO THE TOP | 51962 |
| ENTER SANDMAN | 50049 |
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| 1979: SMASHING PUMPKINS | 52040 |
| HENDRIX: FOXY LADY | 51979 |
| SMOOTH CRIMINAL | 50038 |
| CHISEL: KHE SANH | 50030 |
| SWEET CHILD OF MINE | 50046 |
| WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE | 52011 |
| G&R: PARADISE CITY | 50711 |
| STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN | 52001 |
| RHCP: GIVE IT AWAY | 52050 |

TOP TEN

| | |
|------------------------|-------|
| 50 CENT: P.I.M.P | 50121 |
| FABOLOUS: INTO YOU | 51595 |
| KYLIE: SLOW | 52059 |
| BEYONCE: BABY BOY | 50141 |
| DELTA G: NOT ME, NOT I | 51985 |
| KELLY CLARKSON: LOW | 52052 |
| ME AGAINST THE MUSIC | 51993 |
| WHERE IS THE LOVE? | 50074 |
| STACY'S MOM | 52053 |
| CHNGY: RIGHT THURR | 50143 |

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| | |
|---|--------------|
| THE SIMPSONS | 50033 |
| SEX & THE CITY | 50032 |
| MUPPET SHOW | 50124 |
| STAR WARS | 50053 |
| MISSION IMPOSSIBLE | 50051 |
| BEVERLY HILLS COP | 50054 |
| JACKASS PARTY BOY THEME | 52015 |
| EYE OF THE TIGER | 50031 |
| BENNY HILL THEME | 50187 |
| BLUES BROTHERS | 51273 |
| FRANKIE... RELAX! | 50193 |
| MASH THEME | 50036 |
| SCOOBY DOO | 50052 |
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| QUEER EYE FOR A STRAIGHT GUY.... | 52072 |
| WIDE WORLD OF SPORTS | 52078 |
| BROWN EYED GIRL | 50544 |
| THE GREAT ESCAPE | 50310 |
| SIX FEET UNDER | 50367 |
| KNIGHTRIDER | 50224 |
| LORD OF THE RINGS | 50085 |

HIT PICKS

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| OUTKAST: HEYA | 52004 |
| PINK: TROUBLE | 52018 |
| NICKELBACK: SOMEDAY | 52029 |
| HOLLY V: STATE OF MIND | 52021 |
| ELVIS: RUBBERNECKIN' | 51950 |
| SUGARBABES: HOLE IN THE HEAD | 52031 |
| DIDO: WHITE FLAG | 51616 |
| XTINA: CANT HOLD US DOWN | 51619 |
| SEAN PAUL: LIKE BLUE | 51530 |
| SNOOP DOGG: BEAUTIFUL | 50019 |
| COLDPLAY: CLOCKS..... | 50005 |
| CHINGY: HOLIDAY INN | 52037 |
| J.WESS: BANG THIS | 51981 |
| B2K: BUMP BUMP BUMP | 50020 |
| DELTA G: INNOCENT EYES | 51536 |
| OJ SAMMY: HEAVEN | 50099 |
| NELLY: DILEMMA | 50050 |
| BIG BROVAZ: NU FLOW | 50017 |
| LUDACRIS: STAND UP..... | 52008 |
| R.KELLY: STEP IN THE NAME OF | 51983 |
| EVANESCENCE: GOING UNDER | 50132 |
| BRING ME TO LIFE | 50066 |
| EMINEM: LOSE YOURSELF | 50007 |
| TIMBALAND: COP THAT SH*T | 52013 |
| CHRISTINA: VOICE WITHIN | 52012 |
| JET: ARE YOU GONNA BE MY GIRL? | 51971 |
| ASHANTI: RAIN ON ME | 51801 |
| COLDPLAY: THE SCIENTIST | 50625 |
| MYA: MY LOVE IS LIKE WO | 51338 |
| J.L.O: BABY I LOVE YOU | 51796 |
| ICE CUBE: YOU CAN DO IT | 51958 |
| GOOD CHARLOTTE: LIFESTYLES | 50232 |
| SALT'N'PEPPA: PUSH IT | 50028 |
| PROCLAIMERS: 500 MILES | 50282 |



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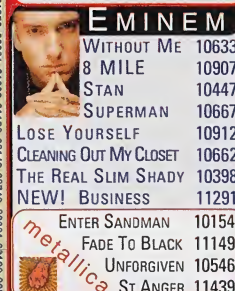
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LOGOS



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| EVANESCENCE: BRING ME TO LIFE | 11091 |
| BUMP BUMP BUMP | 10998 |
| NELLY: DILEMMA | 10846 |
| JENNY FROM THE BLOCK | 10881 |
| DJ SAMMY: HEAVEN | 10705 |
| CHRISTINA AGUILERA: DIRTY | 10872 |
| 2PAC: CALIFORNIA LOVE | 10679 |
| DR DRE: NEXT EPISODE | 10696 |
| DELTA: LOST WITHOUT YOU | 11163 |
| GOOD CHARLOTTE: ANTHEM | 11132 |
| LPARK: SOMEWHERE I BELONG | 11179 |
| XZIBIT: MULTIPLY | 10955 |



| | |
|------------------------|-------|
| WITHOUT ME | 10637 |
| 8 MILE | 10903 |
| STAN | 10447 |
| SUPERMAN | 10667 |
| LOSE YOURSELF | 10912 |
| CLEANING OUT MY CLOSET | 10662 |
| THE REAL SLIM SHADY | 10398 |
| NEW! BUSINESS | 11291 |
| ENTER SANDMAN | 10154 |
| FADE TO BLACK | 11149 |
| UNFORGIVEN | 10546 |
| ST ANGER | 11439 |

PURE CLASSICS

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| BLISTER IN THE SUN | 10069 |
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| ACDC: HELL'S BELLS | 11069 |
| ACDC: THUNDERSTRUCK | 10531 |
| ACDC: BACK IN BLACK | 11064 |
| ENTER SANDMAN | 10154 |
| SMOKE ON THE WATER | 10435 |
| I WAS MADE FOR LOVING YOU | 10248 |
| BIG YELLOW TAXI | 11049 |
| HOTEL CALIFORNIA (SOLO) | 10237 |
| KEVIN B. WILSON: SHOCK THAT PHONE | 10458 |
| LEE K: THE OUTBACK CLUB | 11036 |
| G&R: SWEET CHILD OF MINE | 10475 |
| BROWN EYED GIRL | 10082 |
| THE LOGICAL SONG | 10277 |

TOP 20!!!

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| KYLIE MINOGUE: SLOW | 11539 |
| 50 CENT: P.I.M.P | 11302 |
| BLACK EYED PEAS: WHERE IS THE LOVE? | 11440 |
| DELTA G: NOT ME, NOT I | 11464 |
| P.DIDDY: SHAKE YA TAILFEATHER | 11454 |
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| KELLY C: MISS INDEPENDENT | 11436 |
| DELTA G: PREDICTABLE | 11518 |
| FABOLOUS: INTO YOU | 11501 |
| R.KELLY: IGNITION (REMIX) | 11176 |
| CHRISTINA: CANT HOLD US DOWN | 11227 |
| JUSTIN T: SENORITA | 11453 |
| SEAN PAUL: GET BUSY | 11283 |
| AMANDA PEREZ: ANGEL | 11452 |
| EMINEM: BUSINESS | 11291 |
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| MARON: HARDER TO BREATHE | 11484 |
| STACIE O: MORE TO LIFE | 11465 |
| B.BENASSI: SATISFACTION | 11442 |
| Pink: Trouble | 11509 |
| R.Kelly: Tholia Tholing | 11522 |
| Blu Cantrell: Breathe | 11546 |
| 50 Cent: In Da Club | 11141 |
| 50 Cent: 21 Questions | 11282 |
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| Dido: White Flag | 11455 |
| Holly V: State Of Mind | 11513 |
| BlackEyedPeas: Shut Up | 11496 |
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| Big Brovaz: Nu Flow | 11014 |
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| Good Charlotte: Girls&Boys | 11396 |
| Coldplay: CLOCKS | 11050 |
| Hot Action Cop: Fever For Flava | 11294 |
| Delta G: Innocent Eyes | 11397 |
| Tupac: Thugs Mansion | 11157 |
| DMX: Gonna Give It To Ya | 11292 |
| Junior Senior: Move Your Feet | 11514 |

CATCHY

| | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| SNOOP: BEAUTIFUL | 11216 |
| TEQUILLA | 10488 |
| I COULD WALK 500 MILES | 10513 |
| SMOOTH CRIMINAL | 10436 |
| THE WIGGLES: HOT POTATO | 11022 |
| THE KETCHUP SONG | 10834 |
| BLINK 182: DAMMIT | 10117 |
| SHAGGY: ANGEL | 10037 |
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| DIXIE CHICKS: LANDSLIDE | 11219 |
| AVRIL LAVIGNE: SK8R BOI | 10845 |
| SALT'N'PEPPA: PUSH IT | 10771 |

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| | |
|--------------------|-------|
| THE SIMPSONS | 10516 |
| SOPRANOS | 11221 |
| RUBBER DUCKY | 10414 |
| SEX & THE CITY | 10424 |
| BENNY HILL | 10058 |
| THE SMURFS | 10517 |
| THE MUPPETS | 10346 |
| THE THUNDERBIRDS | 10530 |
| MANAMANA (MUPPETS) | 11231 |
| SCOOBY DOO | 10420 |
| I DREAM OF JEANNIE | 10644 |
| BAKERS DELIGHT AD | 10786 |

FILM THEMES

| | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| EYE OF THE TIGER | 10163 |
| MISSION IMPOSSIBLE | 10338 |
| ACT A FOOL (2F2FURIOUS) | 11325 |
| JACKASS INTRO | 11058 |
| JACKASS: WE WANT FUN | 11062 |
| LORD OF THE RINGS | 10986 |
| BOND 007 | 10278 |
| HARRY POTTER | 10221 |
| THE GODFATHER | 10503 |
| PINK PANTHER | 10382 |
| STAR WARS | 10452 |
| BEVERLY HILLS COP | 10061 |
| TERMINATOR THEME | 10489 |

#1 CAT EMPIRE: HELLO 11567

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Monaco

YOXY

HOLDEN

Rockass

e-Sexy

FLIP

Ford Racing

orgasm don't

STAR

I PUNANI

I fart in bed.

AC/DC

TOUCHA MY PHONE

SIAPPA YOUR FACE

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50cent: In Da Club

Salt'n'Pepp: Push It

EMINEM: Without Me

Blister In The Sun

We Want Fun (Jackass)

jackass

PICTURE MESSAGES

I'll make you bedrock

I WANT YOU

Talk To The Hand

KISS ME!

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